



Peace & Security Council Report

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Is the African Charter on democracy strong enough?

When it was first adopted in 2007, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (the African Charter) raised the hopes of democracy activists, who believed this would strengthen good governance on the continent. Last month the Peace and Security Council (PSC) asked whether it has managed to make a difference.

In the past few decades, most African countries have held regular elections, albeit often flawed and contested. Fewer coups d'état on the continent are largely the result of the rejection of coups by the African Union (AU), in line with the African Charter and the AU Constitutive Act.

Yet democracy is subverted in many other ways and the AU has no illusions about this. Last year, when the AU marked the 10th anniversary of the African Charter, the outgoing chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC) Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma admitted that the continent had recorded some modest gains that were outweighed by persistent governance deficits.

Fewer coups d'état on the continent are largely the result of the rejection of coups by the AU, yet democracy is subverted in many other ways

Dr Khabele Matlosa, the director of the AU's Political Affairs Department, told the PSC during the open session on 22 August 2018 that only Togo had submitted a report on compliance to the African Charter since it had entered into force in February 2012. Thus far, the African Charter has been signed by 46 member states and ratified by 31.

Current PSC Chairperson

His Excellency Arcanjo Maria do Nascimento, the Angolan ambassador to Ethiopia and permanent representative to the African Union.

PSC members

Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Democracy deficits

The slow pace of democratisation in Africa is highlighted by the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2017 Democracy Index, which indicates that many African countries remain under authoritarian and hybrid regimes. Their democratic institutions have serious weaknesses.

As a result of weak democracies, the continent also suffers from development and service delivery deficits. A 2016 ISS study highlights that democracy in Africa often fails to translate into development, because of the lack of governance capacity among leaders. According to the report, many leaders come to power through patronage networks and rigged elections, a situation created by the relative absence of competitive electoral systems.

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) of 2017 also affirms that there has been an overall decline in good governance in Africa.

In addition, the 2018 Freedom House findings show that the transfer of power to ‘new leaders from old parties may fail to bring reform’. In Zimbabwe, for example, the new regime that replaced former strongman Robert Mugabe continues to use heavy-handed military measures to squash dissent. This illustrates how new regimes struggle to extricate themselves from the past.

As a result, it is crucial to strengthen democratic institutions.

What can be done?

PSC meetings, electoral observation missions and various continental assessment mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism provide unique opportunities for the AU to hold members accountable to their commitment to democracy. The African Charter is the ideal mechanism for the AU to do so, since it sets a standard for good governance and free and fair elections. However, the AU also needs to deal with gaps in the charter that perpetuate the subtle subversion of democracy in member states.

This entails finding solutions to the increase in constitutional coups and ‘popular uprisings’ on the continent.

Constitutional coups and the African Charter

Article 23.5 of the charter prohibits ‘any amendment or revision of the constitution or legal instruments, which is an infringement on the principles of democratic change of government’. However, in numerous cases African leaders have used their leverage to remove term and age limits from their countries’ constitutions, enabling them to stay in power.

Successful constitutional amendments have been witnessed in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, the Republic of Congo, Gabon, Chad, Djibouti and Equatorial Guinea. This has paved the way for the re-election of incumbent strongmen. In these countries the political situation remains tense as sitting leaders and their patronage networks struggle to maintain popular support.

A report by the African Centre for Strategic Studies on term limits in Africa shows that the 18 countries that do not observe two-term limits are more unstable than those with two-term limits. ‘A third of these 18 countries are facing armed conflict. In contrast, just two of the 21 countries with term limits are in conflict.’

Clearly, constitutional amendments are not problems in themselves. Article 10.2 of the AU Charter encourages member states to obtain constitutional amendments through a referendum, but often these referendums and subsequent elections are manipulated by the incumbents.

Concern over such amendments is also highlighted by the 2015 Afrobarometer study, which shows that in 34 countries, three-quarters of those surveyed are in favour of presidential term limits.

Even in cases where citizens supposedly want a political actor to stay on in power, as in Rwanda, too little is being asked about the priority of developing strong democratic institutions. These are important to avoid domination not only by one individual but also by incumbent parties that wield control through undemocratic means.

Lack of enforcement by the AU

The AU, guided by the African Charter and the Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government, has clear guidelines on how to deal with issues relating to overt military coups and refusal to leave power when the incumbent loses elections.

The AU has clear guidelines on how to deal with issues relating to overt military coups and refusal to leave power

Thus far, however, the AU has been tight-lipped about constitutional amendments, even though they are listed in the charter as one of five ‘illegal means of accessing or maintaining power’ that are collectively defined as the unconstitutional change of government.

The AU has not instituted an inquiry mission to verify if any of the above-mentioned constitutional amendments go against Article 23.5 of the Charter. Clearly, the AUC has not fulfilled its mandate to ‘develop benchmarks for implementation of the commitments and principles of this

Charter and evaluate compliance by State Parties' in accord with Article 44.2 of the charter.

In 2014 the PSC had asked the AUC to 'collect the Constitutions of all AU Member States for reference and ultimate study, subject to the availability of funds in order to identify inconsistencies with good governance and standard constitutionalism and therefore constitute a potent threat to social order, peace and stability'. This has not been done and it is unclear if it is because of resource constraints or political considerations on the part of the AUC officials.

The PSC has also not put countries facing constitutional amendments on its agenda, in line with the PSC Protocol, which mandates it to institute sanctions in cases of unconstitutional changes of government.

The charter does not say anything about the different forms of popular uprisings that have caused the overthrow of incumbent governments in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe

Instead, constitutional amendments are relegated to mere domestic issues without considering the fact that they are very often obstacles to lasting peace and democratic consolidation in member states.

Popular uprisings and the AU Charter

Additionally, the charter does not say anything about the different forms of 'popular uprisings' that have, for example, caused the overthrow of incumbent governments in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia in 2011, as well as in Burkina Faso (2014) and Zimbabwe (2017).

It could be argued that the overthrow of a dictatorship is good for democracy, but there are many concerns over what kind of government could come to power following such an overthrow. Popular uprisings can be hijacked by actors that perpetuate or worsen the political situations in those countries, as was clearly shown in Libya.

After the popular uprisings that led to the overthrow of regimes in North Africa in 2011, there initially was concern within the AU about the ability of AU norms and principles to deal with such events. The PSC in April 2014 called for a special summit of the AU Assembly for high-level guidance relating to the overthrow of authoritarian regimes by popular revolt. This summit was never held.

The PSC also never established a sub-committee to consolidate the AU framework on how to respond to such situations, as it had decided.

Clearly, the PSC and the AUC have to develop guidelines on how to deal with popular uprisings and constitutional amendments, alongside other electoral-related efforts to deepen democracy in Africa.

75%

OF CITIZENS POLLED IN

34 countries

ARE IN FAVOUR OF
TERM LIMITS

The AU's African initiative vs. Russian/Sudanese mediation in the CAR

On 19 September 2018 the PSC discussed the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), where the AU launched its African initiative in early 2017. This is supported by the CAR government. A parallel effort by Russia and Sudan, however, is creating confusion, and the roles of these various initiatives should be clarified.

The situation in the CAR remains extremely volatile in spite of numerous efforts by the international community to bring about lasting peace in the country.

The election of Faustin-Archange Touadera as president of the CAR in March 2016, following a transition period led by Catherine Samba-Panza (2014–2016), elicited new hope for a peaceful and prosperous CAR.

One of Touadera's main challenges, along with repairing the shattered social fabric, is to deal swiftly with the recurring problem of armed groups.

In the face of continued violence after several collapsed peace deals initiated and/or supported by different actors, the AU officially endorsed the African initiative for peace in the CAR in January 2017.

The AU and its partners (the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Angola, the Republic of Congo, Gabon and Chad) adopted a new Roadmap for Peace and National Reconciliation in the CAR in July 2017, with the aim to promote dialogue towards securing the disarmament of armed groups and a return to peace.

The AU officially endorsed the African initiative for peace in the CAR in January 2017

However, since then the implementation of this roadmap has been confronted with the difficult reality on the ground in the CAR. In addition, there are parallel initiatives, with the latest being an initiative by Russia, a new player in the CAR, which hosted peace talks in Sudan last month. Russia signed a military cooperation agreement with the CAR earlier this year and Sudan and

Russia have been strengthening their bilateral ties since the end of 2017.

Uncontrollable armed groups

Armed groups in the CAR have changed over the past 20 years, and their number has been increasing since the crisis that began in 2012.

From about half a dozen major armed factions in 2008, today there are officially 14 such groups in the country. The peace agreements signed between 2008 and 2017 are illustrative of this changing landscape in the CAR.

This multiplicity of politico-military groups can be explained by the general chaos that followed the March 2013 coup d'état, and the emergence of opportunistic 'entrepreneurs of violence' who seek to fill the vacuum resulting from the absence of the state or governing authority outside the capital Bangui.

The ex-Seleka coalition disintegrated in August 2013 (and was not homogeneous to begin with) and the Anti-Balaka had been constituted in a disparate and decentralised way.

The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme in the CAR faces the dilemma of dealing with the fragmentation and proliferation of armed groups and identifying their actual leaders.

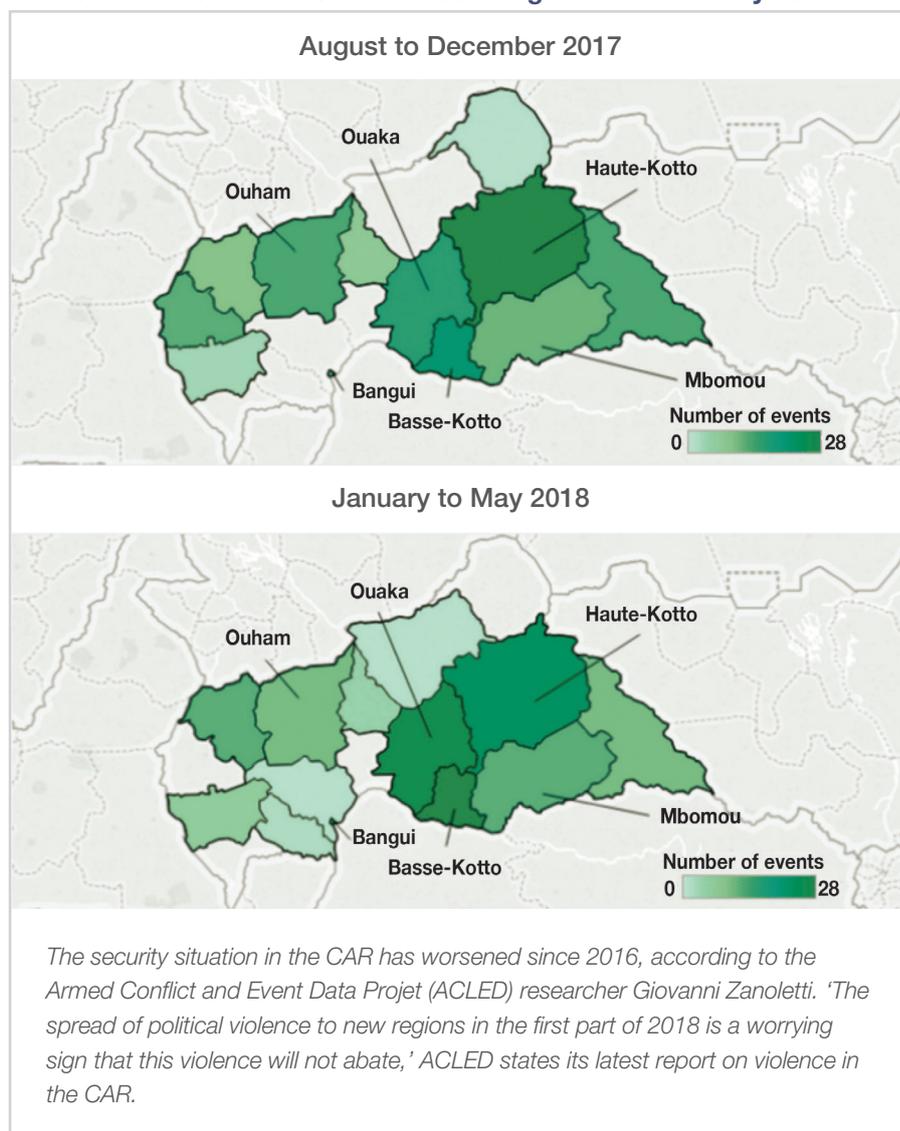
The other main issue preventing disarmament is the disagreement between the government and armed groups regarding amnesty, with Touadera's government strongly opposed to an 'amnesty for all'.

A failure to bring offenders to justice in preceding crises has also contributed to the CAR's instability.

The trouble with concurrent peace initiatives

The AU-led African initiative has been consulting various national and international stakeholders since end 2016.

Political violence in the CAR between August 2017 and May 2018



Source: Armed Conflict and Event Data Project (ACLED).

This approach aims to include all actors who can contribute to the return of peace to the CAR and to merge all other peace initiatives, whose duplication has all too often spoiled peace efforts.

Although the other initiatives, including that of the Community of Sant'Egidio, were successfully combined under its banner, Russia's arrival on the CAR terrain has complicated matters.

Because peace initiatives can include or exclude certain actors, they tend to legitimise initially marginal(ised) actors or exclude important ones. Even more problematically, concurrent peace initiatives offer these actors two arenas in which to air their grievances, to the detriment of making headway in a single process.

The Russia/Sudan parallel peace process presents such a challenge and is without doubt a thorn in the side of the AU-led initiative.

14

ARMED GROUPS IN
THE CAR

Russia's involvement

Russia became officially involved in the CAR in December 2017, when it secured an exemption from the United Nations (UN) Security Council to re-arm the CAR's newly trained security and defence forces. Touadera had sought Russia's help during a trip to Sochi in October 2017, where he met Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov. In May 2018 Touadera met with President Vladimir Putin.

Since December 2017 the Russians have become involved in a range of activities in the CAR. Officially they provide weapons and training to CAR security forces and have become part of Touadera's close security apparatus.

They were also seen to take part in the peace process as early as April 2018, stepping in to negotiate with armed groups in the town of Kaga-Bandoro. A July 2018 midterm report by the UN Panel of Experts on the CAR notes that Touadera's new national security advisor, a Russian national, is one of the individuals conducting peace negotiations with armed groups.

It thus appears that the CAR authorities knew about Russia and Sudan's initiative in Khartoum, while also still supporting the AU's process.

The AU invited 14 armed groups to the negotiating table in Bouar from 28 to 30 August. Yet during the same period Russia and Sudan summoned the top leaders of five of the 14 armed groups to Khartoum. The government's overt support for the AU's initiative and tacit agreement with Russia's involvement thus raised concerns over the viability of concurrent peace processes.

It appears that the CAR authorities knew about Russia and Sudan's initiative in Khartoum

The Bouar meeting produced a consolidated report of the armed groups' demands, which the AU special representative in the CAR presented to the president on 31 August.

Interestingly, the 'Entente de Khartoum' resulting from the eponymous meeting contains similar demands from the leaders of the armed groups present in the

Sudanese capital, namely the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique, or FPRC (Noureddine Adam), the Anti-Balaka (Maxime Mokom), the Conseil National de Défense et Sécurité – the FPRC's armed wing (Abdoulaye Issène), the Mouvement Patritotique pour la Centrafrique (Mahamat Al-Khatim) and the Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (Ali Darras).

Following these meetings, it was unclear which of the two initiatives is the most viable, although the Khartoum conclave consisted of the most prominent armed groups' leaders, who created a common platform, the Rassemblement Centrafricain (RCA). The RCA now appears to be yet another unified front against/in discussion with the government.

For the peace process to advance, the CAR government will have to unequivocally clarify its position

It would therefore seem as though the Russian initiative has taken over from its African competitor. On 6 September Valery Zakharov, the Russian advisor to Touadera, explained the merits of the Russian approach to some 20 CAR members of Parliament, signalling that the president approved of Russia's initiative.

It should also be noted that the Entente de Khartoum makes reference to the African initiative and that the CAR government responded by 'taking note' of the Khartoum process while reaffirming its commitment to the African initiative.

At the very least, since the CAR authorities were well aware of the Russian initiative, this shambles does not bode well for the desired dialogue in the CAR. In addition, it calls into question the *modus vivendi* of the African initiative, which is to remain the sole initiative for national reconciliation and peace in the CAR in order to do away with the multitude of counterproductive peace initiatives.

For the peace process to advance, the CAR government will have to unequivocally clarify its position vis-à-vis its Russian partner's initiative and the AU-led mediation. One will have to be subsumed under the other.

Political infighting endangers SADC's hard work in Lesotho

Infighting in Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's ruling All Basotho Convention (ABC) party could scupper progress in getting Lesotho's stalled roadmap to reconciliation and political reforms off the ground. This after political parties had agreed at a national leadership forum in Maseru to discuss ways forward. The PSC travelled to Lesotho last month to assess the situation.

Lesotho Prime Minister Thomas Thabane is under pressure from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to ensure that the political reconciliation succeeds and that the security sector reform process moves ahead.

To get all the belligerents in Lesotho around the same table is not easy, given the animosity between the political actors who have been at loggerheads since 2014. The main sticking point has been the continued exile in South Africa of opposition leader Mothetjoa Metsing and a request by Lesotho for him to be extradited to stand trial for corruption.

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Former South African deputy chief justice Dikgang Moseneke, appointed by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to represent him in Lesotho, finally convinced the Lesotho government to withdraw its request. This led to a breakthrough and opposition parties agreed to participate in the August 2018 national leadership forum. Ramaphosa is the SADC facilitator in Lesotho.

Speaking to the SABC's *Channel Africa*, Lesotho government secretary Moahloli Mphaka said the forum was a 'confidence-building' exercise and that a national dialogue planning committee had now been set up to plan further meetings. The first would be a 'national multi-stakeholder dialogue' on 9 and 10 October, he said.

Political parties in Lesotho are on board, but some are still calling for a truth and reconciliation committee and amnesty for those who were implicated in the 2014/15 violence, he said. Opposition parties are also asking for the release of former army chief Tlali Kamoli, who has been

9–10 October
2018

A NATIONAL DIALOGUE
IN LESOTHO

behind bars for almost a year on charges linked to the August 2014 coup attempt. There has been little progress in this regard.

The Grace Mugabe phenomenon

While inhabitants of Lesotho could be encouraged by progress made in the inter-party talks, the serious problems plaguing the ruling ABC and the governing coalition are cause for concern. A meeting of the party on 25 and 26 August, just after the leaders' forum, led to a violent confrontation between Thabane and those in the party who are opposed to him and his wife Maesaiah.

Some Basotho draw the comparison between Maesaiah and the former Zimbabwean first lady Grace Mugabe, whose interference led to a backlash

Members opposed to Thabane, led by suspended chairperson and former tourism minister Motlohi Maliehe, accuse Maesaiah Thabane of meddling in government business – tender processes in particular.

Some Basotho draw the comparison between Maesaiah and the former Zimbabwean first lady Grace Mugabe, whose interference in politics led to a strong backlash inside the country and the ruling ZANU-PF against her and her husband, former president Robert Mugabe. Thomas Thabane, 79, married Maesaiah, 41, in August last year.

Infighting and a possible split in the governing party could throw the current dialogue process in disarray. Whether Thabane will continue his hold over the ABC will become evident during its next party conference at the beginning of next year, but tensions in the run-up to the event could cause serious damage to the party and Thabane's government.

Lesotho has a long history of floor-crossing and coalition governments and the latest rumours about a possible deal between Thabane and opposition leader Selibe Mochoboroane of the Movement for Economic Change come as no surprise. Mochoboroane is head of the Public Accounts

Committee in Lesotho. The move has been strongly opposed by Thabane's critics in the ABC.

Reforms to keep the army out of politics

The main aim of the reforms is to ensure that the army stays out of politics. At the end of last year SADC sent a mission of 269 military personnel, police and civilian experts to try to help Lesotho's defence forces. The mandate of the SADC Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL) expires on 21 November this year.

SADC refused the Lesotho government's request to have the mandate extended by three months. Mphaka told Channel Africa that Lesotho felt it needed more time, especially since the new facilitator, Moseneke, was only appointed in May. 'But deployment to a member state comes with a cost and we accept the decision,' he said. He said the government pledged to work with SADC to stabilise the situation by the end of November and to complete the reform of the security sector by May 2019.

A renewal of SAPMIL, however, is not completely ruled out. During a visit by the PSC to Lesotho last month, mission chairperson Susan Sikaneta, Zambian ambassador to Addis Ababa, said the extension would be discussed by the AU next month. A report on SAPMIL was expected to be tabled by the end of October, she told *Lesotho Times*.

SADC refused the Lesotho government's request to have the mandate extended by three months

The AU in January this year asked member states to contribute to the SAPMIL budget to the tune of \$1.6 million. The total cost of the mission for the six months is said to be \$6m. It is the mandate of the PSC to oversee all crises on the continent, and Sikaneta said the PSC supported SADC's efforts. Clearly, parallel initiatives between SADC and the PSC would be counter-productive.

Moseneke should be given a chance to succeed. His next big task would be to ensure that the ABC gets its house in order, otherwise all manner of national dialogues and reconciliation processes could again be put on hold.

Looting could make South Sudan peace efforts impossible

South Sudan's government, opposition and rebel groups have signed an agreement that lays the foundation for a transition government. But many doubt that the current peace will hold.

The latest deal to end the country's brutal civil war was signed by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, former vice president-turned-rebel leader Riek Machar, and opposition leaders at a regional summit on 12 September in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The agreement suggests that the reservations of rebels and opposition groups have been resolved. It's unclear though how regional leaders resolved concerns relating to the proposed transition government, the number of devolved states and a new constitution.

It is also unclear whether the root causes of the civil war – an untamed wealth race by the country's elite and vested foreign interests – will still undermine the country's political and economic affairs.

Scramble for power and profit

The elite's relentless zero-sum scramble for power and profit has given rise to corruption and kleptocracy characterised by massive illicit financial flows that have impoverished the country. It took intense international pressure for the country's belligerents to reach an agreement.

The elite's relentless zero-sum scramble for power and profit has given rise to corruption and kleptocracy

For the South Sudanese elite this agreement could be merely a chance to renegotiate a greedy political and economic order that maintains a stranglehold on the country's revenue. The transition is fraught with risks that raise three pertinent questions.

First, what resources would sustain the transition government? Funding the bloated government of 40-plus cabinet members and 550 legislators, together with members of devolved state parliaments and administrations, will depend on oil revenue and international support. The finance ministry says renewed oil production should make up for the over US\$4 billion revenue loss during the civil war. But governance ineptitude has led to donor fatigue, making international financial support less likely.

If the current large-scale waste, misappropriation and mismanagement continues, it is hard to imagine how the bloated government and growing military will receive salaries on time. Prompt remuneration will be critical to prevent discontent that can easily degenerate into more fighting.

12 September

SIGNING OF THE LATEST
PEACE DEAL IN
SOUTH SUDAN

Oil the only game in town

Second, what is the economic alternative to oil? The landlocked country's economy relies almost entirely on some 3.5 billion barrels of oil reserves. South Sudan remains dependent on foreign companies and its northern neighbour, Sudan, for its oil to reach the international market. The civil war destroyed or forced a shutdown of most oil rigs and devastated the economy while international oil prices dropped significantly.

The apparent alternatives to oil are international support, which is unsustainable, and investments in other sectors by foreigners and South Sudanese, mostly in the diaspora. Diversifying the country's economy is unlikely if renewed violence keeps investors away.

The landlocked country's economy relies almost entirely on oil reserves

For trade, the country would need its neighbours, especially Uganda and Sudan, which have supported either side of the belligerent groups to protect their own trade and oil interests. In this way South Sudan's neighbours have fuelled the country's civil war. These interests are not likely to disappear with the signing of the peace agreement.

No regime change

Third, what if either Kiir or Machar or both were out of the equation? The success of the transition government depends on genuine cooperation and teamwork between them. Leadership alternatives to the two are likely to be viewed with suspicion or receive little support.

For instance, former deputy army chief-turned-rebel commander General Thomas Cirilo Swaka's recent visit to the US to meet the South Sudanese diaspora caused jitters back home. It raised questions about plans for a regime change engineered by the US government using the rebel leader.

Any violent attempt to eliminate either leader is likely to have devastating outcomes for the country. Whether peaceful regime change is a viable option remains an open question though, since the current order is seen as guaranteeing access to public resources and personal wealth.

Mistrust between Kiir and Machar is likely to pose a big challenge to lasting peace if the two carry the past into the transition. Tension and the risk of violence would be a constant cloud over the country. Even if either or both were to be out of the equation for whatever reason, their political influence and corrupt networks are unlikely to fade quickly.

A change in approach that focuses on transparency and zero tolerance for corruption and kleptocracy is needed to ensure social, political and economic stability. For this, all parties need to be genuinely committed to lasting peace. Narrow foreign interests and a continued untamed wealth race among the elite will make this mission impossible.

\$4 billion
REVENUE LOST DUE TO
THE WAR

Discussions around the African Standby Force gain momentum

The obstacles preventing the deployment of the African Standby Force (ASF) were once again on the agenda of the PSC on 19 September 2018. Indications are that an overhaul of the ASF concept will include some elements of the now almost defunct African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), notably its flexibility.

Africa has changed a lot in the last 15 years, and threats that could call for the deployment of African peacekeepers have evolved dramatically. Experts agree that one of the main issues constraining the ASF and its five regional brigades is its doctrine, which dates back to 2003.

Next month, October 2018, a number of workshops are taking place to review the AU's broader policy on peacekeeping and the ASF concept. Among the issues that will be discussed are redefining the ASF concept, and developing a broader AU doctrine for peace operations and a legal framework that regulates the relationship between the AU and regional economic communities and regional mechanisms (RECs and RMs).

What has been achieved so far?

While the ASF in its current form has never been deployed, some progress has nevertheless been made in getting it ready to intervene in crises on the continent.

Experts agree that one of the main issues constraining the ASF and its five regional brigades is its doctrine, which dates back to 2003

The inauguration of the first ASF continental logistics base in Douala, Cameroon on 5 January 2018 is seen as one such positive step forward for the ASF. The base is set to boost the AU's capacity to provide logistical support to peace operations.

The ASF was declared fully operational following the AMANI Africa II field training exercise in South Africa in late 2015. An AU assessment, however, showed that Central and Northern Africa were lagging behind in developing their regional standby forces, while significant progress had been made by Western, Southern and Eastern Africa.

The AU Commission in late 2016 also developed a five-year work plan (2016–2020) for the ASF. Thus far command-post training and exercises to boost the military, police and civilian components of the ASF have been carried out.

2015

THE ASF DECLARED
OPERATIONAL

Redefining the ASF concept

One of the issues on the agenda for the October discussions is a review of the peace support operations doctrine. This process is the result of major changes in the security landscape in Africa. New scenarios for its deployment need to be envisaged. Rather than only dealing with civil wars, African peacekeepers also have to deal with terror groups, transnational organised crime and piracy. They are also called to step in during humanitarian disasters, crises such as the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the massive displacement of refugees and migrants.

Apart from the change in the type of threats that peacekeepers are facing, crises are also no longer clearly defined in geographic areas. Most insurgencies and rebellions plaguing Africa today disregard regional boundaries.

An AU assessment showed that Central and Northern Africa were lagging behind in developing their regional standby forces

Ad hoc regional arrangements such as the G5 Sahel joint force fighting terrorism in the Sahel and the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad area have since been established out of necessity. The regional brigades of the ASF do not correspond to the countries affected by these threats or to those countries willing to participate in peacekeeping efforts.

A peacekeeping doctrine

Currently the AU does not have a specific policy for peacekeeping operations, but draws on the ASF doctrine to provide direction. Yet the ASF is only one of the tools available for intervention. An AU policy on peacekeeping can therefore provide broader guidance on its principles for peace support operations.

Over the past few decades it has, for example, become clear that the AU is willing to engage in proactive efforts to enforce peace, unlike the United Nations (UN), which deploys only after peace deals have been reached. The AU's deployment in Somalia as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is an example of this more offensive stance of the AU.

An overarching AU peacekeeping policy would thus include deployment to enforce peace in conflict situations. In many instances this would mean 'stabilising' the situation so that the UN can take over.

A legal framework with regions

As part of the rethink of the ASF, there is a proposal on the table to sign memorandums of understanding with the RECs and RMs.

2013

THE CREATION OF ACIRC

A clearer demarcation of roles between the AU and RECs is, in fact, one of the aims of the current AU institutional reforms. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to peacekeeping. It is often asked: who should decide on deployment in times of crisis: Addis Ababa or RECs? A legal framework to complement the PSC Protocol will help to clarify roles.

It will also be useful to clarify the command and control of regional forces. This should help minimise tensions between the AU and RECs on how to use the ASF for crisis management.

Linkages with ACIRC

The ACIRC was created in 2013 as a response to the crisis in Mali, during which Africa's lack of readiness to deploy in crisis situations was highlighted. However, ACIRC never deployed and there has been uncertainty over its fate for several years.

Now that the ASF is officially operational, when will ACIRC be disbanded? The other question is, what lessons from ACIRC can help improve the ASF?

It was initially conceptualised as a voluntary framework for rapid intervention in crises across the continent, pending the operationalisation of the ASF.

Now that the ASF is officially operational, when will ACIRC be disbanded? The other question is, what lessons from ACIRC can help improve the ASF?

Whatever the scenarios for ACIRC going forward, it has become clear that some elements of the rapid force, particularly its flexibility, will be incorporated into the ASF. ACIRC's flexible nature is a result of the fact that its voluntary members (14 currently) can deploy across the continent without being constrained to a certain geographical area, as is the case with the five regional brigades of the ASF.

As explained above, many threats traverse several RECs and an AU peacekeeping force should be able to intervene regardless of the regional configuration.

Furthermore, the uneven capacities of AU member states mean that some states are more willing and able to deploy rapidly in conflict situations than others. It is thus crucial that member states cooperate across regions.

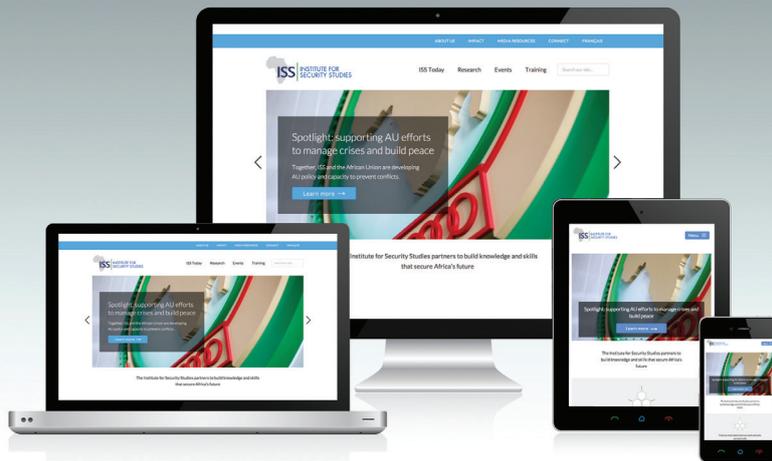
In view of the ongoing threats in Africa, the upcoming discussions around the ASF doctrine are critical for AU member states to fast-track the ASF's capabilities and readiness for deployment.

14

COUNTRIES
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