

A4P and the UN-AU Partnership

Introduction

The preamble to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping, developed as part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P),¹ emphasize the need for enhanced commitment to peacekeeping. To enable such collective action, the A4P identifies, in addition to seven other building blocks, the improvement of partnerships. Essentially, the focus on improving partnerships is to deepen the collective commitment of the UN and relevant international organisations including the African Union (AU) to collaboration and planning; a clear delineation of the roles of respective organisations and the provision of predictable, sustainable and flexible financing for AU-led operations. It is also to guarantee and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers as well as to better prepare, train and equip uniformed personnel for peacekeeping by Member States.

In fact, all the elements of the A4P's partnerships pillar have been highlighted in the Brahimi², Prodi³ and the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations reports⁴ among others. In addition, the evolution of the cooperation between the UN and the AU in the area of peace and security has already provided useful lessons for enhancing and consolidating the partnership for peacekeeping. Since 2007 when it became part of the Security Council's agenda, this partnership has developed significantly, resulting in the development of frameworks for enhanced coordination and cooperation. In 2013, for instance, the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the African Union-United Nations Partnership, themed "The Need for Greater Coherence"⁵ identified a number of ways to deepen AU-UN partnership including flexible and innovative application of the principle of subsidiarity, and mutual respect and adherence to the principle of comparative advantage among others. Similarly, the

1 <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/a4p-declaration-en.pdf>

2 <https://undocs.org/A/55/305>

3 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/RO_S2008_813.pdf

4 https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446

5 <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-rpt-au-un-partnership-ny-23-09-2013.pdf>

Background details

This paper was originally produced as a background paper for the Challenges Annual Forum 2018. The Forum was hosted 27 to 29 November in Stockholm by the Swedish Armed Forces and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. More than 140 participants from over 30 countries, the United Nations, academia and think-tanks took part in the dialogue over two days. The theme for the annual forum was *Action for Peacekeeping: Strengthening the Effectiveness of Future Peace Operations*.

About the Author

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2017 Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace Operations⁶ provides a joint framework of action on the full spectrum of conflict management through collaboration, cooperation and financing.

Beyond the above policy frameworks, *in praxi* the growing partnership between the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU as well as the various forms of operational partnerships in the field, ranging from the light and heavy support packages to the African Union Mission to Sudan (AMIS) which morphed into the current hybrid United Nations - African Union Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) to the logistics support to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) from UN assessed contributions, demonstrates the prospects of UN-AU partnership, and the flexibility by the two institutions to guarantee peace and security. This notwithstanding, the inconsistent application of the principles underpinning the partnership has affected its optimization. In addition, although the UN and AU have worked together to address some of the newer threats confronting global peace and security, the lack of a conceptual discourse on the issues, the types of support needed to effectively address the challenges and implications for the provision of such support has created challenges at the operational and strategic decision-making levels of the partnerships. Improving the partnership between the UN and the AU therefore requires a consistent application of the principles on which the partnership hinges and an alignment of the conceptual and policy considerations of the two organisations to the security imperatives that they seek to address. This Policy Brief provides options for enhancing the partnership between the UN and AU especially in the area of peacekeeping.

The State of UN-AU Partnership for Peacekeeping: Reviewing the Gaps

Since it first featured on the Security Council agenda in 2007, considerable progress has been made in the AU-UN partnership. Institutionalised regular consultations between the UN Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the AU has facilitated interaction between the two decision-making bodies and contributed to a collective responsiveness by the two institutions. Similarly, the Joint Task Force (JTF) and desk-to-desk meetings between the strategic level decision makers and the operational level officers of the two organisations respectively, convened twice a year, facilitates coordination between the two. The collective burden-sharing efforts undertaken by the two organisations in Sudan's Darfur region and in Somalia have resulted in considerable progress in addressing the crisis in the two countries. The two organisations also worked in collaboration to de-escalate the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 and Burkina Faso in 2011 and 2014 respectively.

⁶ https://unoau.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/signed_joint_framework.pdf



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Notwithstanding the notable progress made, there are a number of areas where the partnership can be strengthened. In 2011, the lack of cooperation between the two organisations in addressing the Libyan crisis undermined the opportunity for collaborating for a durable solution to a complex security challenge. The on-going crisis in Libya reinforces the fact that an enhanced partnership between the UN and the AU is a strategic imperative for addressing the security challenges confronting the two organisations. The Joint UN-AU Framework on Enhancing Partnerships recommends that the two organisations undertake joint assessments and analysis of challenges as the basis for the development of mutually reinforcing responses. As part of this, there is need to also agree on a framework for measuring success to inform the development of mission mandates including resources and timelines for drawdown and exit. Even though joint reviews and political compromises have formed the basis for these decisions, there have been divergences in opinion by practitioners.

A prerequisite for improving the partnership between the UN and the AU is appreciation by the two organisations of the strengths and limitations of each other. Whilst the UN has the global mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security and as a result, the legitimacy to engage in the full spectrum of peacemaking efforts, it is constrained by its legal and normative frameworks in addressing contemporary security challenges that are characterised by asymmetric threats. The AU, which has innovated and developed response mechanisms to address such threats on the other hand, is confronted with significant resource constraints.

Even though the UN and AU have worked together to leverage their strengths to address contemporary security challenges over the years to innovatively respond to security challenges on the continent, doctrinal challenges continue to limit the effectiveness of the partnership. For example, the arrangement between the UNSC and the AU PSC in which the AU utilizes its legal provisions to mandate robust peace operations involving the use of lethal force and the UN authorizes and provides capability support for the operations as in the case of the AMISOM has helped to work around the doctrinal and resource constraints of the two organisations respectively. Indeed, the practice of first response has been extended to ad hoc security initiatives, a coalition of sorts by member states, developed to respond to particular challenges in instances where both the UN and AU are constrained to act. The development of these first response mechanisms, some of which include offensive operations, has been a welcome relief for the UN, which constrained to act, has endorsed such initiatives by legitimising them through UN Security Council authorizations and recognitions; and in some instances, resource support.

Notwithstanding the fact that these innovative response models provide the UN with the tools for implementing its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, it is also confronted with challenges.

There is no mutually-agreed response framework by the two organisations to provide guidance on the practical aspects of partnering to address contemporary security threats such as terrorism and violent extremism that challenge the effectiveness of traditional peacekeeping. First, in traditional peacekeeping, the UN relates to member states and not regional multilateral organisations. Second, unlike classical or even contemporary peacekeeping operations, which are deployed after an agreement has been reached, deployments to address contemporary security threats in parts of Africa often take place in the heat of conflict, when there is no peace to keep. In these new threat environments such as in Somalia, consent is not always sought, the use of force has become the norm as efforts are made to degrade the enemy (usually characterized as terrorists and/or violent extremists) and the mission works in concert with the recognised national authorities to defeat the enemy. Consequently, forces involved in these operations are often viewed as legitimate targets by terrorists and armed groups.

AMIS, AMISOM and the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) show that the UN and AU are able to partner to address contemporary security challenges. Notwithstanding, lessons from the three also reveal that there are no clearly defined parameters on burden sharing of security challenges between the AU and UN. As a result, even though support has been provided on a case-by-case basis, the modalities for the provision of support remain largely unpredictable. In addition, in the case of AMISOM, concerns have been raised over the manner in which the UN support has been provided, especially as it relates to the fact that the mission leadership does not have control over the capabilities required to execute their mandate. Even though terrorism is one of the main threats to global peace and security, the UN has been reticent and cautioned against mandating counter-terrorism operations (Report of the Independent High Level Panel on Peace Operations⁷). The interdependence of the AU and UN will be better optimised if decision-making processes are informed and shaped by evidence based analysis of effective burden-sharing that takes cognisance of the political capital and material resources brought by each partner.

There is a recognition and appreciation of the fact that the UN and the regional entities have individual strengths that need to be leveraged towards the realization of the goals of the partnership. A clear division of labour based on the principles of equality and transparency is critical to minimizing competition among partners and enhancing cooperation. Given the political nature of the entities in the partnership, strategic interests will be a key consideration in all efforts. In Somalia, the military successes achieved so far has been as a result of the application of the principle of complementarity: with the African Union providing troops generated from member states, the EU providing financial support for sustenance and the UN providing logistical support for the operations.

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⁷ https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/446

Complementarity must be utilised alongside the practical dimension of subsidiarity; which means that the entity closest to the challenge is most likely to have the leverage to address it. In this vein, the principle of complementarity goes beyond the division of labour to include strengthening members of the partnership to enable each one to be able to rise to the occasion and better perform their assigned tasks/responsibilities.

Although the peace operations on which the UN and AU has collaborated has involved the two organisations on one hand and member states on the other, this is likely to change in the face of the operationalization of the African Standby Force which is made up of regional standby capacities that are held in readiness by the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and governed by specific legal provisions. There is therefore a need for the AU to have clear mechanisms, processes and frameworks for the employment and management of the standby forces so as to ensure that it is able to bring all its component parts to the table when required.

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Key Considerations for deepening the UN-AU Partnership

In addition to the above, a number of issues need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of the Partnership between the two organisations.

The provision of predictable, sustainable and flexible resources, including funding for AU peace operations is fundamental to improving peacekeeping partnerships. Although various support models have been developed to support peace operations collaboratively undertaken by the AU and UN, they are fraught with challenges. Funding through Trust Funds financed through voluntary contributions that are expected to support UN endorsed and recognised peace operations has not served such peace operations well. They are not predictable mechanisms because pledges are not always contributed in a timely manner. Bilateral assistance on the other hand, which has helped in supporting some of the initiatives that the UN has not been able to support and have been instrumental in ensuring that the AU is able to undertake some of its responsibilities, are not always predictable, flexible and adequate. The AU's effort to fund some of its peace operations is a step in the right direction. However, given the financial situation of most African countries African peace operations will still require significant support in the short to medium term. A more workable format is therefore required on the corresponding responsibilities that accompany the various nomenclatures used to classify peace operations such as "authorised" "recognised" and "endorsed." The other side of the coin in relation to the provision of predictable and sustainable financing is resource accountability. Compliance with policies, processes and procedures for financial fidelity is essential to enhancing the effectiveness of the Partnership.

A critical reflection is required on an emerging phenomenon in peace operations – the deployment of national troops operating from their

national territories as part of peace operations. The high human cost of addressing contemporary security threats have led to reluctance by member states to deploy into theatres of operation where they have little strategic interests. The emerging trend, seen in the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Against Boko Haram and the G5 Sahel Joint Force are paradigmatic shifts from the traditional practice of sending uniformed personnel from countries far away from the situation of insecurity to keep peace; to deploying national troops usually along territorial borders, to address the threat. Although these mechanisms were developed to address the security threats confronting their respective countries, developments with the G5 Sahel Joint Force signals a shift in the concept and practice of these mechanisms. The G5 Sahel Force is not merely to maintain the territorial integrity of its participating states but also to complement the efforts of the French Operation Barkhane, which has an antiterrorist mandate. Although the RCI-LRA and the MNJTF have not received support from the UN, the G5 Sahel Force which is a complex support mechanism for addressing the terrorist threat in the Sahel receives logistical support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Linked to the above is the need to strike a balance between the need to uphold the normative and policy frameworks of the Organisation whilst at the same time ensuring that the requirements of contemporary peace operations are provided for in a timely manner. It is noteworthy that the UN's human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP)⁸ provide a guide to ensuring that UN support to non-UN forces is consistent with the provisions of the Charter and international law. The HRDDP has been utilized as a tool for engagement to support the strengthening of existing policies and the development of additional AU compliance policies to guide the high intensity peace operations that the UN has been associated with. However, the innovation in the partnership has also resulted in new developments that require consideration.

Conclusion

The Secretary-General's call comes at a critical time for the UN and its partners especially because multilateralism in general is under threat and the UN and other multilateral entities have to ensure that multilateralism as a principle is adhered to by member states. Partnerships are established to achieve set objectives and goals. There is already recognition that neither the UN nor the AU can win on its own and so now more than ever, an improved partnership between the two is absolutely crucial to among others, demonstrate legitimacy, coherence and credibility. The partnership between the UN and AU must therefore be tooled to be able to deliver on its

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⁸ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/AMeetings/20thsession/IdenticalLetterSG25Feb2013_en.pdf

objectives. Calibrating internal processes in the various entities is important for optimizing the political and operational responsiveness of the partners.