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Comparative Analysis of the Performance of EU and AU Peacekeeping Missions in Sub-Saharan Africa

Dirk Kohnert ¹

*An African paradox:
Mediating foreign wars while ignoring homegrown turmoils*



Source: © Heni, addisfortune.news, 20 May 2023

Abstract: Africa is plagued by some of the most brutal and violent conflicts in the world. Peacekeeping missions play a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in conflict-prone regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Both the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) are involved in peacekeeping operations in the region. The AU conducts peacekeeping missions through its Peace and Security Council (PSC) and in line with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Numerous international partnerships are at the heart of the APSA, but the AU cannot yet stand alone. However, the AU has the advantage over the EU and NATO in that it allows majority voting, making the decision-making process more flexible. The reasons for intervention are often unclear, although they often include both narrow national self-interest and humanitarian intervention. Africa's regional and sub-regional security organisations have often been more concerned with 'enhancing the sovereignty' of nation states than with the responsibility to protect. The AU's operational capacity is limited, it is poorly integrated into civilian-led conflict management efforts, and it has failed to intervene decisively in the continent's current major armed conflicts. The AU's ability to stop conflicts in Africa has produced mixed results at best. So far, the APSA is not an African solution to African problems, but rather a messy series of hybrid, international responses to some of the continent's transnational security challenges. Moreover, the AU has struggled to create a basic institutional memory of its peace operations, let alone systematically distil lessons learned. In addition to the AU, the EU is also involved in interregional cooperation for peace and security in Africa. There is a direct relationship between the EU and the AU in the form of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. The EU has conducted peacekeeping missions under its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), often in cooperation with other international organisations such as the United Nations. Examples of EU peacekeeping missions in Africa include Mali, the Central African Republic and Somalia. While the EU benefits from greater resources and international partnerships, the AU enjoys regional legitimacy and ownership. However, it is important that the EU and the UN continue to promote 'African solutions to African problems'. However, the European Peace Facility (EPF), established in March 2021, is more likely to be an unsecured weapon on the EU table. It is becoming the EU's main funding instrument for military activities outside the EU. It was first used to support the African Union and Mozambique. But many decisions with potentially serious consequences are being taken hastily. Instead of stabilising situations, the EPF could entrench dictatorships and fuel conflicts, especially when used in Africa.

Keywords: [AU](#), [APSA](#), [EU](#), [peacekeeping](#), [European Peace Facility](#), [Common Foreign and Security Policy](#), [Françafrique](#), [ECOWAS](#), [coup d'état](#), [governance](#), [sustainable development](#), [post-colonialism](#), [informal sector](#), [ODA](#), [Common Security and Defense Policy](#), [Peace and Security Council](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), [Mali](#), [Central African Republic](#), [Niger](#), [Somalia](#) [Nigeria](#), [Rwanda](#), [African Studies](#)

JEL-Code: D31, D62, D72, D74, E26, F22, F35, F51, F52, F53, F54, F55, H12, H56, N47, Z13

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1. Introduction

Cartoon 2: Cyril Ramaphosa and other African leaders flatter Putin at the 2023 Russia-Africa Summit



Source: © [Zapiro](#), [Daily Maverick](#), 25 July 2023

At the end of July 2023, at the second [2023 Russia-Africa summit](#) in [Saint Petersburg](#), African statesmen made a bold attempt to mediate in the ongoing [Russo-Ukrainian War](#). The African leaders in attendance had presented their peace plan to [Putin](#) already a month earlier. It included several steps to diffuse the conflict, notably the Russian withdrawal from [Ukraine](#), the removal of Russian tactical nuclear weapons from [Belarus](#), the suspension of the [International Criminal Court](#) arrest warrant against [Putin](#), and the easing of [Western sanctions against Russia](#) (DW, 2023).

But Africa was deeply divided on the issue. Only 17 of Africa's 54 heads of state attended the summit, compared to 43 at the [first summit in 2019](#), including leaders from [Comoros](#) (current chair of the [African Union](#) (AU)), [Egypt](#), [Senegal](#), [South Africa](#), [Uganda](#), and [Zambia](#). However, the mission failed, unsurprisingly, not least because of the overriding self-interest of African countries in ending the war and thereby securing Russian supplies of grain, energy and military equipment. It also highlighted the inability not only of African leaders, but of [African peacekeeping missions](#) in general, to address conflicts adequately and 'silence the guns' within Africa.

Cartoon 3: Diplomatic deference



Source: © [Brandan Reynolds](#), [Sunday Times](#), Johannesburg, 30 July 2023

At a time of major geopolitical shifts, an international charm offensive was underway to win the support of African leaders who are eager to exploit the situation and reluctant to take sides over Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Moscow, Beijing and Paris were among the major global players taking sides (Reynolds, 2023).

However, foreign observers asked: “where is the African delegation to [Sudan](#)?!” Because two months earlier, a bitter conflict between the [Sudanese Armed Forces](#) (SAF) and the [Rapid Support Forces](#) (RSF) had killed thousands and displaced some two million people. Why was a powerful delegation of African leaders jetting off to solve a war in [Europe](#) while Sudan was being torn apart (Nzuki, 2023)?

It was neither the first nor the only unforgivable failure of the [AU](#) in history. The AU's outdated emphasis on non-interference, often used as a pretext, was even more difficult to accept in these circumstances. [Sovereignty](#) has too often been invoked to shield member states from taking decisive action against human rights violations, undermining the duty to protect enshrined in the 1986 [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights](#) (Editorial (Addis) Fortune, 2023).

In contrast to African peace-keeping endeavours, the UN is said to be better placed to conduct credible and effective peace operations in Africa due to its resources and experience. Since 1960, there have been more than thirty [UN peacekeeping missions](#) across Africa, the most of any region. Actually, half of the UN's dozen peacekeeping missions around the world are in Africa. They are active in [Abyei](#), an area contested by Sudan and South Sudan ([UNISFA](#)), in the [Central African Republic](#) ([MINUSCA](#)), the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) ([MONUSCO](#)), [Mali](#) ([MINUSMA](#), terminated on 30 June 2023), [South Sudan](#) ([UNMISS](#)), and [Western Sahara](#) ([MINURSO](#)) (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

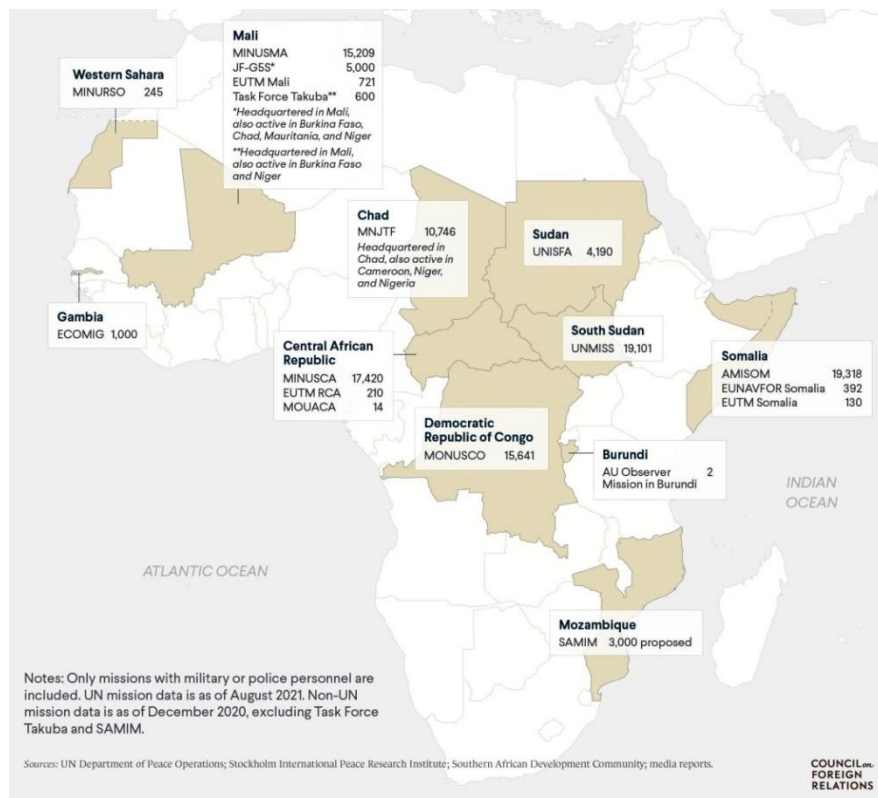
Cartoon 4: *The questionable effectiveness of UN peacekeepers ...*



Source: © [Damien Glez](#), [toonpool.com](#), 13 November 2018

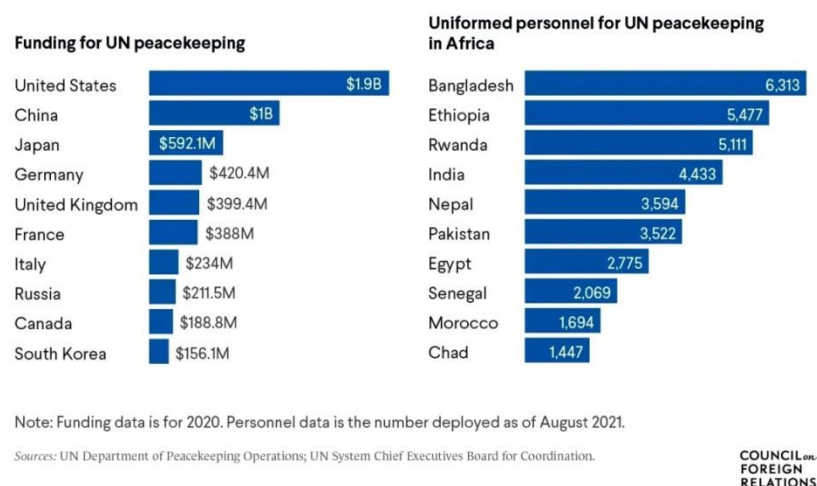
As of summer 2021, [Bangladesh](#), [Ethiopia](#), and [Rwanda](#) were the top contributors of military and police forces for these missions. Other African troop providers among the top ten included [Egypt](#), [Senegal](#), [Morocco](#) and [Chad](#). The [United States](#), [China](#), and [Japan](#) were the top donors to the [UN Department of Peace Operations](#). But the UN cannot always do so quickly, which opens up a theoretical window of opportunity for African institutions to act as rapid first responders. Peacekeepers have come under fire for failing to intervene at critical moments. They have also been accused of committing human rights abuses, including widespread allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately, the AU has not yet been able to seize this opportunity (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

Graph 1: Major multilateral peace and security operations in Africa
Number of uniformed personnel for UN and non-UN missions



Source: © graphic: Will Merrow, [Council on Foreign Relations](#), Klobucista & Renwick, 2021

Graph 2: Peacekeeping funding and personnel come from different countries
Top ten contributors of funding and of personnel



Source: © graphic: Will Merrow, [Council on Foreign Relations](#), Klobucista & Renwick, 2021

But relations between the UN and the AU were sometimes hampered by considerable conflict, mistrust and tension. This often obstructed the predictability, conduct and effectivity of peace operations. A greater focus on grass-root conditions and bottom-up factors, such as the specific operational and financial challenges posed by the [AU's major missions in Darfur](#), [Somalia](#), [Mali](#) and [Sudan](#), and the different organisational cultures and bureaucratic constraints within which both organisations had to operate, could have improved decision-making on operational responses and the conduct of peace operations significantly, both in

headquarters of [Addis Ababa](#) and of [New York](#) (Williams & Boutellis, 2014). The same holds for [EU peace missions in Africa](#) that, despite its relative superior capacity, responded most often more slowly than the AU, the [ECOWAS](#) and other less affluent regional organizations conducting similar peace operations (Hardt, 2009).

2. AU Peacekeeping missions

Cartoon 5: *African Unity: Are we there already?*



Source: © [John Swanepoel & John Curtis](#), [Deutsche Welle](#) (DW) ²

Africa is plagued by some of the most brutal and violent conflicts in the world. As the nature of warfare changes, so too does the ability of states to provide security and political stability to their citizens (Söderbaum & Tavares, 2011). The relationship between regional and multilateral [peacekeeping](#) organisations is changing, but in Africa the former are becoming increasingly important. Compared to the [EU](#) and [NATO](#), the [AU](#) has the advantage of [majority voting](#). This makes the decision-making process more flexible (Freire & Lopes & Nascimento, 2016).

The reasons for intervention are often ambiguous, although they are likely to include both narrow national self-interest and humanitarian ambitions. Africa's regional and sub-regional security organisations are more about '[sovereignty enhancement](#)' than the 'responsibility to protect', enshrined in its [human rights constitution](#) (Söderbaum & Tavares, 2011). Moreover, although the phrase '*African Solutions to African Problems*' sounds very popular, it is neither obvious that 'Africa' could nor should solve all the continent's problems (Møller, 2009).

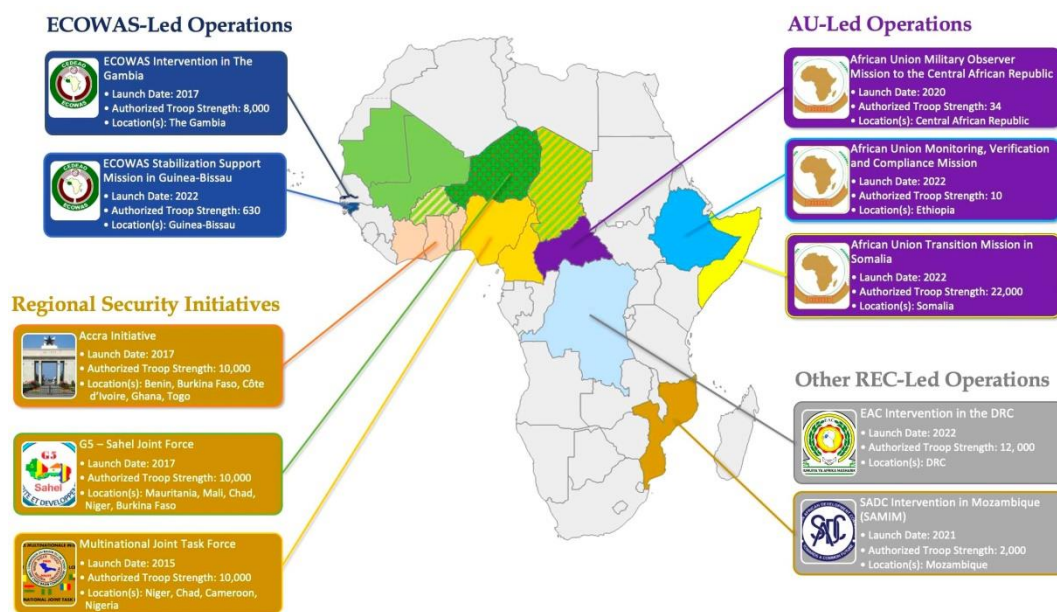
The AU launches peace operations when authorised by its fifteen-member [Peace and Security Council](#). The Council has no permanent members, but is elected by its fifty-five member states. The [African Standby Force](#) is an important element of the AU's peace-keeping

² The cartoon "[Are we there already?](#)" was created by South African artists John Swanepoel and John Curtis, known in their home country as "[Dr Jack & Curtis](#)". They won first prize in the 2013 cartoon competition organised by the German Third World Journalists Network. The theme of the global competition: 50 Years of African Unity (1963-2013). (Braun; Maja (2013): [Zum 50. Geburtstag: Die Afrikanische Union als Karikatur](#). [Deutsche Welle](#) (DW), 25 May 2013; Image: DWJN).

structure. In addition, [AMISOM](#)'s initial mandate, authorised by the AU [Peace and Security Council](#) and the [UN Security Council](#) in early 2007, focused on protecting the [Transitional Federal Government of Somalia](#) as it took power in the capital (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021). Yet, the scope of the mission changed over time. In recent years, the primary mandate became to facilitate the transfer of security tasks to [Somali](#) forces while reducing the threat posed by [Al-Shabaab](#) and other Islamist groups. On the other hand, missions of *ad hoc* initiatives could exist also outside the conventional UN framework. Thus, the [G5 Sahel](#) Joint Force, that complemented [MINUSMA](#) and comprised forces from [Burkina Faso](#), [Chad](#), [Mali](#), [Mauritania](#) and [Niger](#), was mandated to combat terrorism, cross-border crime and human trafficking in the region (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

African-led peace operations are becoming increasingly important in addressing the continent's security challenges. The [African Peace and Security Architecture](#) (APSA), which emerged in the late 1990s, offered a hypothetical but as yet unfunded solution to Africa's security problems. Key reasons for the creation of APSA were the failure of the UN and the international community to intervene in remote conflicts in Africa throughout the 1990s and the reluctance of the [Organisation for African Unity](#) (OAU) to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign nations (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

Graph 3: Active African-led peace operations, 2023



Source: [ACSS](#), Allen, 2023

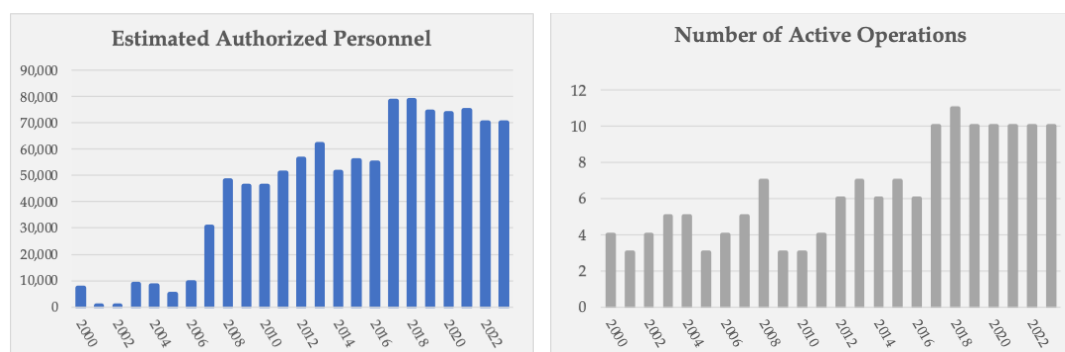
Peacekeepers on the ground could have considerable benefits. In principle, they correlate with fewer civilian casualties, and more peacekeepers, particularly more diverse peacekeepers, correlate with both fewer civilian deaths and fewer military deaths. In 2017, for example, the AU and Africa's eight [Regional Economic Communities](#) (RECs) authorized four new African-led peace operations, matching 2017 for the most in any calendar year. The AU and regional actors then oversaw 10 peace operations, comprising more than 70,000 authorized personnel, spread across 17 African countries (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

Nevertheless, [peacekeeping](#) missions in Africa have been criticized for a wide range of problems, including mismanagement, failure to act when civilians are under threat, rights abuses by peacekeepers, financing troubles and failure to intervene at critical moments. For example, in September 2021, some 450 of [Gabonese peacekeepers](#) were withdrawn from the

Central African Republic ([CAR](#)) following allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of girls. [Bangui](#) as well as the UN opened a probe. UN peacekeepers enjoy immunity from prosecution in the countries where they are deployed, leaving it to their home countries to take legal action. This may be one of the reasons why few allegations have led to prosecutions and none resulted in a public conviction, although UN investigations into such allegations have increased in recent years. Last, but not least, the veto power of the [Security Council's](#) permanent members, sometimes delayed or weakened peacekeeping mandates, such as in Western Sudan's [Darfur](#) region (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021).

But many of these problems had been due to overly ambitious mandates. For example, it was unrealistic to ask [MONUSCO](#) to protect all civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo ([DRC](#)), given the geography and the difficulties of moving through that large terrain. In addition, in the absence of a productive relationship with the local authorities, a sustained effort to protect the civilian population could hardly be expected (Klobucista & Renwick, 2021). Limited operational capabilities have been poorly integrated with civilian-led [conflict management](#) efforts. The AU has failed to intervene decisively in Africa's major armed conflicts. In order to fulfil its long-sought role as the primary guarantor of peace and security on the continent, the organisation and its member states need to institutionalise achievements and address shortcomings in the current regional security architecture (Allen, 2023).

Graph 4: Growth in African-Led Peace Operations (2000-2023)



Source: Allen, 2023; ACSS

Data Sources: [Williams 2013](#); [SIPRI](#); [Security Council Report](#); AU; ECOWAS; [Fisher and Wilen](#)

The African Union Mission in Burundi ([AMIB](#)) was the first AU-mandated armed peace operation. AMIB's deployment was authorised in 2003 before the inauguration of the AU's [Peace and Security Council](#) (Badmus, 2015). AMIB was hailed as a successful mission and recommended as a possible model for future peace operations in Africa. However, despite its relative success, the mission lacked credible political leadership and insufficient troops on the ground. It was unable to fully deliver on its mandate, even though the level of lethal violence was already declining when the mission was deployed (Badmus, 2015).

In conclusion, also considering the role of AU's missions in [Somalia](#) and [Sudan](#), APSA offered only a hypothetical but as yet unfunded solution to African security problems. It lacked domestic elite cooperation, local initiative and international political commitment. This underlined the need for factors as the integrity of the lead state and troops for certain peace operations (Cocodia, 2017). In contrast, to date, the UN's resources and experience have made it better placed to conduct credible and effective peace operations in Africa (Badmus, 2015).

External funding to the AU and the eight regional economic communities (RECs) over the past 15 years, mostly from the three powerful external actors, the EU, the US and China, has

also proved problematic. The AU has been by far the most targeted recipient in the world. Funding has been concentrated on a few favoured RECs ([ECOWAS](#), [IGAD](#) and [SADC](#)), while other RECs have received little support. Although a few donors provided most of the funding, they differed significantly in terms of priority areas and targeted organisations (Stapel & Söderbaum, 2020).

Also, the AU has struggled to create a basic institutional memory of its peace operations, let alone systematically distil lessons from them (Williams, 2016). The AU cannot yet stand alone. So far, the APSA is not an African solution to African problems, but rather a messy set of hybrid, international responses to some of the transnational security challenges facing the continent (Williams, 2016). The [African Union](#) is still perceived as a club of African heads of state and governments, with oligarchs who have not been legitimately elected. Although it shares a relatively similar name and structure with the [European Union](#), the historical context of the AU makes it quite different (Chigudu, 2018).

3. EU Peace-keeping missions in SSA

Cartoon 6: *The European Peace Facility, an unsecured gun on EU's table*



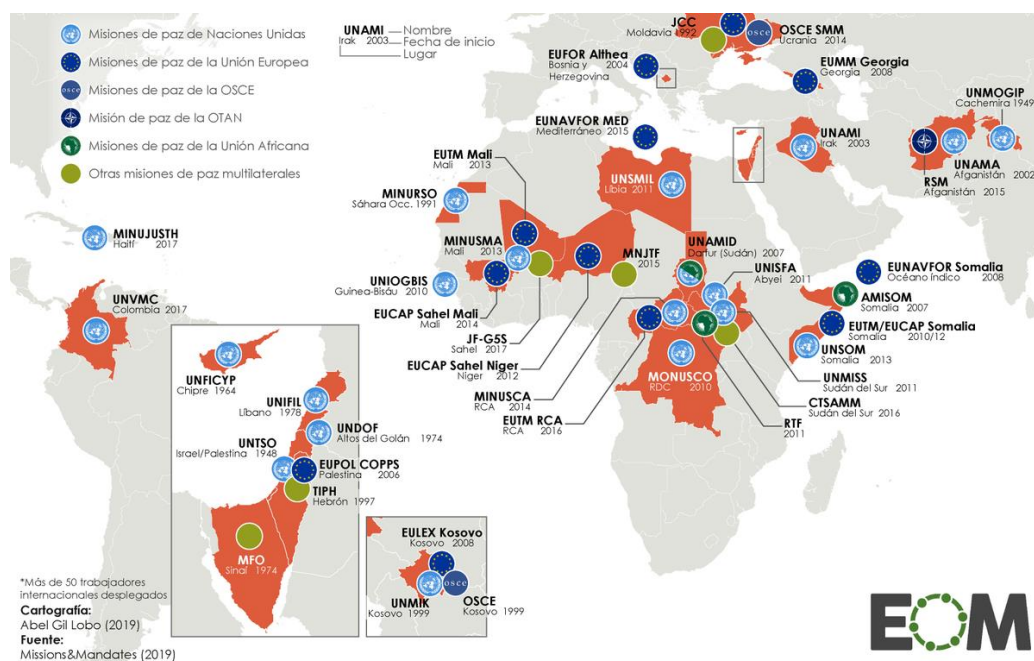
Source: © investigate-europe.eu, Fotidiadis & Schmidt, 2022

The effectiveness the African-EU partnership on peace and security and of interregional security cooperation is based on mutual resource dependency, establishes convergence based on intensive interaction, benefits from increased (internal) capabilities drawn from a high coherence within both ROs, and acts within a facilitating conflict setting characterised by high domestic support. Since 2003, the EU led 21 peace-keeping missions in Africa, overwhelmingly focussed on Sub-Saharan Africa (see detailed list Graph 6).

The [European Peace Facility](#), an off-budget EU financing instrument created in March 2021, is becoming the EU's main funding tool for military activities outside of the EU. But many decisions with possibly severe consequences are still taken in a rush (Fotidiadis & Schmidt, 2022). In addition, the facility still lacks parliamentary control; there is no scrutiny by the European Parliament. The [Mali war](#) showed the pitfalls of this instrument. Despite evidence of serious abuses by EU-trained soldiers, the EU extended the mandate of the military European Union Training Mission in Mali ([EUTM](#)) in March 2020. The mission remained engaged even after a military [coup in May 2021](#). Recent developments after the coup d'états in Mali, [Niger](#) and [Guinea](#) have exposed the weaknesses of the European External Action

Service ([EEAS](#)) risk analysis. Instead of stabilising the situation, the EEAS could entrench the dictatorship and fuel conflict. It could also lead to the proliferation of weapons (Fotidiadis & Schmidt, 2022).

Graph 5: Major EU peace-keeping missions in Africa, 2019



Source: © [@elordenmundial](#), [Maps on the Web](#), 2021











There are parallels between the EU and the AU in terms of their objectives, and although they come from different historical experiences, their aspirations are similar. For example, both unions hope to use regional integration to promote peace, stimulate economic growth, achieve solidarity for their people and raise their international profile and status. Just as the EU has used regional integration to foster and promote peace through an increasingly interdependent economic structure, the AU needs regional integration as a tool for promoting pan-African peace to enhance the prospects for positive economic outcomes. Perhaps the single most remarkable achievement of the EU has been to ensure that war is an unthinkable option for the resolution of conflicts within the EU. A popular saying sums it up: "*Borders frequented by trade seldom need soldiers*" (Abdulrahman & Abraham, 2021).

Interregional cooperation on peace and security is a key feature of the EU's external relations and it is particularly relevant to [Africa-EU relations](#). The Africa-EU Partnership on Peace and Security is a key area of EU foreign policy (Plank, 2022). There is a direct relationship between the EU and the AU in the form of the Joint Africa–EU Strategy, as underlined already in the Lisbon Declaration in December 2007 and the common Roadmap 2014–2017. Most of the issues addressed in this strategy, including the focus on peace and security, are related to the UN's agenda. Therefore, it is important that the EU and the UN continue to support 'African solutions to African problems' (Rein, 2015).

Interregional cooperation in peace operations is able to achieve its objectives and reduce violence when partners share the resources they need, develop convergence through intensive interaction, have capabilities based on intra-organisational coherence, and act in a conducive conflict environment with high domestic support (Plank, 2022a). Interregional cooperation in peace operations becomes effective and sustainable when it is able to exchange resources on the basis of mutual resource dependence and builds convergence on the basis of intensive

interaction. Additional conditions are that it benefits from increased (internal) capabilities resulting from a high degree of coherence within both regional organisations and operates in a favourable conflict environment characterised by high domestic support. Taken together, these conditions increase the likelihood of interregional effectiveness in terms of both target- and actor-centred effectiveness (Plank, 2022b).

Graph 6: List of the major 21 EU peace-keeping missions in Africa

Beginning	End	Name	Abbreviation	Alternative name	Personnel	OHQ
12 June 2003	1 September 2003	European Union Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	EUFOR Artemis	Operation Artemis	1800 ^[5]	 Paris
12 April 2005	30 June 2007	European Union Police Mission in Kinshasa^[c]	EUPOL Kinshasa	N/A	?	?
8 June 2005	2016	European Union Security Sector Reform Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo^[d]	EUSEC RD Congo	N/A	?	?
18 July 2005	31 December 2007	European Union Support to African Union Mission in Sudan^[e]	AMIS EU Supporting Action	N/A	?	?
12 June 2006	30 November 2006	European Union Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2006)	EUFOR RD Congo	N/A	2300 ^[5]	?
1 July 2007	30 September 2014	European Union Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo^[g]	EUPOL RD Congo	N/A	?	?
12 February 2008	30 September 2010	European Union Mission in Support of Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau^[h]	EUSSR Guinea-Bissau	N/A	?	?
17 March 2008	15 March 2009	European Union Military Operation in Chad and the Central African Republic	EUFOR Tchad/RCA	N/A	3700 ^[5]	?
5 November 2008	—	European Union Naval Force Somalia	EU NAVFOR Somalia	Operation Atalanta	1200 ^[5]	 ES OHQ
10 April 2010	—	European Union Training Mission in Somalia	EUTM Somalia	N/A	100 ^[5]	 MPCC
16 July 2012	—	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia^[i]	EUCAP Somalia	EUCAP Nestor ^[j]	?	 CPCC
February 2013	January 2014	European Union Aviation Security Mission in South Sudan^[k]	EUAVSEC Sudan	N/A	?	?
18 February 2013	—	European Union Training Mission in Mali	EUTM Mali	N/A	500 ^[5]	 MPCC
May 2013	—	European Union Integrated Border Assistance Mission in Libya	EUBAM Libya	N/A	?	 CPCC
10 February 2014	23 March 2015	European Union Military Operation in the Central African Republic	EUFOR RCA	N/A	600 ^[5]	?
April 2014	—	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali	EUCAP Sahel Mali	N/A	?	 CPCC
23 March 2015	16 July 2016	European Union Military Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic	EUMAM RCA	N/A	?	?
16 July 2016	—	European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic	EUTM RCA	N/A	?	 MPCC
			EUMCAP	N/A	40	?
16 July 2012	—	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia^[i]	EUCAP Somalia	EUCAP Nestor ^[j]	?	 CPCC
April 2014	—	European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali	EUCAP Sahel Mali	N/A	?	 CPCC
20 February 2023	—	European Union Military Partnership Mission in Niger^[21]	EUMPM Niger	N/A	?	?

4. Comparing AU and EU peacekeeping effectiveness

Cartoon 7: Is the [Rwandan army](#) becoming the [Wagner](#) of [France](#) and the [EU](#) ?



Source: © [Jambonews](#), Norman Ishimwe, 14 February 2022

Evaluating [peacekeeping](#) missions is a difficult task. First, because the line between keeping and enforcing peace is blurred and contested. According to the late UN Secretary-General [Boutros Boutros-Ghali](#), the logic of [peacekeeping](#), which is usually unarmed or lightly armed and uses a minimum of force, originates from political and military premises that are quite different from those of military [peace enforcement](#). The dynamics of the latter are incompatible with the political process that peacekeeping is supposed to facilitate (Stopford, 1996). Second, the methods used to evaluate the [effectiveness](#) of peacekeeping missions are highly contested. Criteria such as limiting armed conflict and promoting [conflict resolution](#) may seem reasonable, but they are too vague. They could lead to conclusions about peacekeeping that are both undeservedly positive and undeservedly (and more often) negative (Johansen, 1994). Therefore, evaluations should not measure peacekeeping against an ideal state of peace (e.g. no armed conflict after deployment) or against an ideal form of conflict resolution (e.g. settlement of long-standing animosities). Rather, they should assess the effect of peacekeeping forces on the affected local population and compare it with the estimated outcomes of a balance-of-power activity without even a modest peacekeeping presence (Johansen, 1994). Also, the context in which peace operations are evaluated is a crucial element that must be taken into account in any evaluation. As a result, an over-reliance on quantitative measures of effectiveness may hinder effective evaluation of operations. Understanding peace operations will tell us more than measuring them (Carvalho & Aune, 2010).

Moreover, the goals of peacekeeping missions have evolved and adapted over time. The UN, for example, became increasingly engaged in [peacebuilding](#) in war-torn societies. And so, by the year 2000 UN peace operations formally involved three principal activities: conflict prevention and peace-enforcement; peace-keeping; and peace-building (Sens, 2004). Also, the role of women and [gender equality](#) has been increasingly considered in peacekeeping activities (Whittington, 2002).

The following factors undermine the [effectiveness](#) of peacekeeping missions in general. First, the [legacy of colonialism](#), with its devastating effects on Africa, including the artificial boundaries drawn between different ethnic groups. Second, the lack of political will and commitment from the [international community](#). Third, the lack of budget resources from member states that are not meeting their commitments. Fourth, unilateral regional and

international support for warring parties, which has fuelled conflict and [proxy wars](#) (Barzani & Barzani, 2022).

This being said, a direct quantitative comparison of the effectiveness and impact of AU and EU peacekeeping missions is hardly possible. Each operation has its own qualitative characteristics. There are both AU and EU peacekeeping missions that are internationally regarded as relatively successful, like the AU Mission in Burundi ([AMIB](#)), and others that have been complete failures, like the [UN-mission in Rwanda](#). In general, EU operations may have been better funded and equipped than genuine AU operations.

Concerning implementing strategies against [human rights](#) violations, however, a comparison of the work of the AU's [African Court of Justice](#) and the [Council of Europe](#), including the [European Court of Human Rights](#), shows that the AU trails. Although the [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights](#) was already established in 1986, the AU is still lagging when it comes to addressing human rights issues. AU member states often abide by the Charter only in so far as it does not interfere with their freedom to do as they please without facing sanctions or suspension from their member organisations. This has been demonstrated, for example, by the repeated withdrawal of African member states from the Charter to uphold its cherished principle of non-interference when individuals or NGOs have attempted to access the African Court directly (Maposa, 2021).

5. Conclusion

Cartoon 8: *What is the meaning of international and European law?*
'We are here to bring peace'



Source: © [Faro](#)³

Rédaction [edcuadroit](#) (2020), Livret No. 8, [edcuadroit.fr](#)

³ [Faro \(France\)](#): A French cartoonist living in Spain, Faro began his career in the sports press within the Actufoot group, for *Cahiers du football*, *Équipe Mag*, *France Football*, etc. He also participates in more general titles (*Nice Matin*), economic (newspapers of the *ForumEco* group) or satirical (*Vigousse* (Switzerland), *Bakchich hebdo*). He also appears on *Équipe TV*. Faro also has numerous comic strips to his credit, both as an author and as a designer and colorist. He is the author, with Marie-Ève Malouines, of the comic strip *Moi Président* telling the behind-the-scenes story of the daily life of President François Hollande at the Élysée. He was recently at the origin of the work "DÉGAGE".

Peacekeeping missions play a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in conflict-prone regions, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) have both engaged in peacekeeping efforts in the region. In conclusion, the above comparative analysis examines the performance of these two organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, focusing on the following eight key areas.

(1) Mandate and Legal Framework

The EU conducts peacekeeping missions under its Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). It often collaborates with other international organizations, such as the United Nations. The AU conducts peacekeeping missions under its Peace and Security Council (PSC) and in accordance with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

(2) Geographic Scope

The EU has conducted peacekeeping missions in various countries worldwide, including Sub-Saharan African countries, for example in Mali, Central African Republic, and Somalia. The AU primarily focuses on conflicts within the African continent, including missions in Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

(3) Funding and Resources

The EU typically has more financial resources and access to advanced military technology. It can mobilize substantial funds for peacekeeping missions. The AU often faces resource constraints, relying heavily on external funding, primarily from the UN and other international partners.

(4) Effectiveness and Impact

The EU's peacekeeping missions have been characterized by a multi-dimensional approach, including military, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts. This approach has contributed to achieving stability in some regions. The AU's effectiveness varies depending on the mission. While its missions in Burundi ([AMIB](#)), Somalia ([AMISOM](#)) and Sudan ([UNAMID](#)) have had some success, challenges persist in other areas, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo ([DRC](#)).

(5) Regional Ownership and Legitimacy

The EU's interventions are sometimes criticized for lacking regional [ownership](#) and [legitimacy](#). Its involvement in conflicts is often seen as influenced by external interests, notably that of the former colonial powers, [Britain](#) and [France](#). The AU, being an African organization, enjoys more regional ownership and legitimacy, which can enhance the acceptance of its peacekeeping missions by local populations.

(6) Coordination and Cooperation

The EU often collaborates with other international actors, such as the UN, which can lead to effective coordination but also bureaucratic complexities. The AU emphasizes African solutions to African problems, promoting cooperation among African states. This can enhance cohesion but may limit external support.

(7) Proxy wars

In recent years, the use of private mercenaries, such as the Russian [Wagner group](#), by failing states, including [Mali](#), the [Central African Republic](#), [Mozambique](#), to offer regimes security in exchange for the transfer of diamond and gold mining contracts to Russian companies, has raised the question of whether this is the beginning of a new area of [proxy warfare](#) in [Sub-](#)

[Saharan Africa](#). Wagner has cultivated exploitative relationships with several African governments, trading military and security services for mining concessions and political access. But the group has little interest in genuine capacity-building, instead seeking to capitalise on and profit from insecurity (Faulkner, 2022). However, the strategy of hiring private mercenaries to do the ‘dirty work’ is nothing new. Already the US contracted former soldiers from the Navy Seals marines for private military companies such as [Blackwater](#), heavily involved in atrocities in the Iraq war in 2007 (Forestier, 2018). The use of convicted criminals as disposable soldiers erodes both penal practice and the rules of war. But the exchange of security for minerals is not generally Wagner’s universal model in Sub-Saharan Africa (Oxford Analytica, 2023).

Nor is the use of mercenaries in SSA restricted to private companies. For example, when the [Mozambican army](#) no longer had control over most of the [Cabo Delgado province](#), which had fallen in the hands of jihadists, Mozambique’s President [Filipe Nyusi](#), pushed to do something by his economic partners, mainly France, was advised to call on his Rwandan counterpart for help. The intervention was driven by the particular interest of multinationals, notably [TotalEnergies](#), the French oil company that could make Mozambique the fourth largest exporter of liquefied gas in the world, and the first in Africa. TotalEnergies, has committed to invest US\$ 20 bn in this project, the largest private French investment ever made on the African continent. [Rwandan](#) President [Paul Kagame](#) was ready to intervene but wanted to secure European support. [Emmanuel Macron](#) and Portuguese Prime Minister [Antonio Costa](#) ensured in 2021 that they would support the move, although some EU members had doubts about the level of funding, which was perceived as too high, while others had doubts about the ethics. Rwanda sent a first contingent of 1,000 soldiers and police in early July 2021. Since then, Rwandan troops have been fighting alongside the Mozambican army and a multilateral force of [SADC](#) countries (Ishimwe, 2022). Although the European decision to support an armed intervention in the province of Cabo Delgado to combat terrorism was justified, the choice of [Rwanda](#) as a security partner was controversial. The European institutions, under the impulse of [France](#), and the former colonial power [Portugal](#), financed the Rwandan army, which the [European External Action Service](#) Commission accused of serious human rights violations, excessive use of force, suspicious deaths in custody, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances (Ishimwe, 2022). Since December 2020, Rwanda has also been used as a counterweight to prevent the Russians from monopolising wealth and influence in the [Central African Republic](#). Since then, Rwanda has acted as a kind of French proxy in the CAR. Apparently, Kagame’s strategy of security diplomacy has paid off. Over the past 20 years, Rwanda has made its army the engine of its diplomacy. It is the fourth-largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces, and the first in terms of the number of troops per capita (Ishimwe, 2022).

(8) Challenges and Criticisms

The EU faces challenges related to divergent national interests among its member states and the lack of a standing military force. The AU faces challenges related to resource constraints, logistical difficulties, and political divisions among member states.

In short, both the EU and the AU have played important roles in peacekeeping missions in Sub-Saharan Africa. While the EU benefits from greater resources and international partnerships, the AU has regional legitimacy and ownership. The effectiveness of each organisation varies depending on the specific mission and context. Closer cooperation between the two organisations and addressing their respective challenges will be crucial in the future to improve peacekeeping efforts.

As for France, it has increasingly to compete with other global military ‘security’ providers. Not only its rival from colonial times, Great Britain, and the divide between Anglophone and Francophone Africa, but also with Russia and, to a lesser degree, with Turkey. With France being kicked out of the military dictatorships of the West African Sahel its interest in participating in peace missions in SSA may also be waning. France was an important troop contributor. On the other hand, the AU's interest in self-determined military interventions, preferably financed by external donors, is increasing. However, the [2023 Sahel crisis](#) as well as the [2023 war in Sudan](#) showed that both [ECOWAS](#) and the AU are finding it difficult to take action against ‘troublemakers’ these days. Finally, given the ever-increasing [populism in the EU](#), it is becoming increasingly unlikely that it will continue to engage in peace missions in Africa in the future as it has done so far, because, for example, not only the [Visegrád states](#) are resisting releasing funds for this, given the exceptionally high burden of military spending to support [Ukraine](#).

As for the political and economic interests of [Paris](#) in its sub-Saharan *pré-carré*, the shady network of [Franceafrique](#), which had been declared dead on several occasions, is still very much alive. Francophone Africa has been dominated to date by the political, economic and cultural repercussions of France’s colonial rule (Kohnert, 2022). A major instrument to assert France's interests was the upkeep of a common monetary policy and currency, the [Franc CFA](#). Although this has been increasingly resented by African politicians and economists, who wanted to replace it by a West African currency (the ‘[Eco](#)’), French interest still prevails, due to the social network of French and African political leaders, the ‘[messieurs Afrique](#)’ who benefit from the system. Controversial international discussion concentrates on questions of sovereignty and formal political and economic questions. However, the rules of the informal sector proved to be at least as crucial in structuring the [CFA-zone](#) as the institutions and policies of the formal economic sector, including its monetary institutions. For decades, for example, prices of French imports were overpriced, due to protection by tied aid and other political and cultural non-tariff barriers to trade. The cost of this [rent-seeking](#) was carried not only by the [French Treasury](#), who guarantees the peg, but by the French and EU taxpayers, who financed budgetary bail-outs and development aid, and last, but not least, by the poorer African member countries and social strata. Although this applies strictly speaking only to the CFA zone, there are strong indicators that things haven't changed much since then for [Francophone Africa](#) in general. The repercussions of rent-seeking in Francophone Africa impact up to date negatively on economic performance. For example, growth levels have been significantly lower since two decades compared with Anglophone competitors (Kohnert, 2022; 2022a).

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Résumé : *[Analyse comparative de la performance des missions de maintien de la paix de l'UE et de l'UA en Afrique subsaharienne]* – L'Afrique est confrontée à certains des conflits les plus violents et brutaux du monde. Les missions de maintien de la paix jouent un rôle crucial dans la préservation de la stabilité et de la sécurité dans les régions en proie à des conflits, en particulier en Afrique subsaharienne. L'Union européenne (UE) et l'Union africaine (UA) contribuent toutes deux aux efforts de maintien de la paix dans cette région. L'UA dirige des missions de maintien de la paix grâce à son Conseil de paix et de sécurité (CPS) et conformément à l'Architecture africaine de paix et de sécurité (APSA). L'APSA repose sur de nombreux partenariats internationaux, mais l'UA n'a pas encore atteint l'autonomie totale. Cependant, elle bénéficie d'un avantage par rapport à l'UE et à l'OTAN, car elle peut prendre des décisions à la majorité, ce qui rend le processus décisionnel plus flexible. Les raisons de l'intervention sont souvent ambiguës, impliquant souvent à la fois des intérêts nationaux étroits et une dimension humanitaire. Les organisations de sécurité régionales et sous-régionales africaines ont souvent privilégié le « renforcement de la souveraineté » des États-nations plutôt que leur responsabilité de protection. De plus, les capacités opérationnelles de l'UA sont limitées, elle est insuffisamment intégrée aux efforts civils de gestion des conflits, et elle n'a pas réussi à intervenir de manière décisive dans les conflits armés les plus graves actuellement en cours sur le continent. En fin de compte, la capacité de l'UA à mettre fin aux conflits en Afrique a produit des résultats mitigés. À ce jour, l'APSA ne constitue pas une solution africaine aux problèmes du continent, mais plutôt une série de réponses internationales hybrides aux défis de sécurité transnationaux auxquels il est confronté. En outre, l'UA a eu du mal à établir une mémoire institutionnelle de base sur ses opérations de maintien de la paix, sans parler de systématiser l'apprentissage qui en découle. En plus de l'UA, l'UE est également engagée dans la coopération interrégionale en matière de paix et de sécurité en Afrique. Il existe un lien direct entre l'UE et l'UA à travers la Stratégie commune Afrique-UE. L'UE a mené des missions de maintien de la paix dans le cadre de sa Politique de sécurité et de défense commune (PSDC), en coopération fréquente avec d'autres organisations internationales telles que les Nations Unies. Parmi les exemples de missions de maintien de la paix de l'UE en Afrique figurent le Mali, la République centrafricaine et la Somalie. Alors que l'UE dispose de ressources plus importantes et de partenariats internationaux, l'UA jouit d'une légitimité et d'une appropriation régionale. Cependant, il est essentiel que l'UE et l'ONU continuent de promouvoir des « solutions africaines aux problèmes africains ». Malheureusement, la Facilité européenne pour la paix (FPE), créée en mars 2021, semble être un instrument potentiellement instable entre les mains de l'UE. Elle est en passe de devenir l'instrument de financement le plus important de l'UE pour les activités militaires en dehors de l'UE. Initialement déployée pour soutenir l'Union africaine et le Mozambique, de nombreuses décisions hâtives aux conséquences potentiellement graves sont prises. Au lieu de stabiliser les situations, l'EPF pourrait renforcer les régimes autoritaires et alimenter les conflits, en particulier s'il est utilisé en Afrique.

Zusammenfassung : *[Vergleichende Analyse der Performanz von Friedensmissionen der EU und der AU in Subsahara-Afrika]* – Afrika wird von einigen der brutalsten und gewalttätigsten Konflikte der Welt heimgesucht. Friedensmissionen spielen eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Aufrechterhaltung von Stabilität und Sicherheit in konfliktgefährdeten Regionen, insbesondere in Afrika südlich der Sahara. Sowohl die Europäische Union (EU) als auch die Afrikanische Union (AU) engagieren sich in friedenserhaltenden Bemühungen in der Region. Die AU führt Friedensmissionen im Rahmen ihres Friedens- und Sicherheitsrats (PSC) und im Einklang mit der Afrikanischen Friedens- und Sicherheitsarchitektur (APSA) durch. Zahlreiche internationale Partnerschaften sind das Herzstück der APSA, die AU kann jedoch noch nicht allein bestehen. Allerdings hat die AU im Vergleich zu EU und NATO den Vorteil, dass sie Mehrheitsentscheidungen ermöglicht und damit den Entscheidungsprozess flexibler macht. Die Gründe für ein Eingreifen sind oft unklar, obwohl es sich dabei oft sowohl um engstirnige nationale Eigeninteressen als auch um humanitäre Interventionen handelt. Den regionalen und subregionalen Sicherheitsorganisationen Afrikas ging es oft mehr um die 'Stärkung der Souveränität' von Nationalstaaten als um die Schutzverantwortung. Die operativen Fähigkeiten der AU sind begrenzt, sie sind schlecht in zivil geführte Konfliktbewältigungsbemühungen integriert und es ist der AU nicht gelungen, entschieden in die derzeit bedeutendsten bewaffneten Konflikte des Kontinents einzugreifen. Die Fähigkeit der AU, Konflikte in Afrika zu stoppen, hat bestenfalls zu gemischten Ergebnissen geführt. Bislang ist die APSA keine afrikanische Lösung für afrikanische Probleme, sondern eher eine chaotische Reihe hybrider, internationaler Antworten auf einige transnationale Sicherheitsherausforderungen, mit denen der Kontinent konfrontiert ist. Darüber hinaus hatte die AU Mühe, ein grundlegendes institutionelles Gedächtnis über ihre Friedenseinsätze zu schaffen, geschweige denn, die daraus gewonnenen Erkenntnisse systematisch zu destillieren. Neben der AU ist auch die EU in der interregionalen Zusammenarbeit für Frieden und Sicherheit in Afrika engagiert. Zwischen der EU und der AU besteht eine direkte Beziehung in Form der Gemeinsamen Afrika-EU-Strategie. Die EU führte im Rahmen ihrer Gemeinsamen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik (GSVP) Friedensmissionen durch und arbeitete dabei häufig mit anderen internationalen Organisationen wie den Vereinten Nationen zusammen. Beispiele für EU-Friedensmissionen in Afrika sind Mali, die Zentralafrikanische Republik und Somalia. Während die EU von größeren Ressourcen und internationalen Partnerschaften profitiert, verfügt die AU über regionale Legitimität und Eigenverantwortung. Dennoch ist es wichtig, dass die EU und die Vereinten Nationen weiterhin 'afrikanische Lösungen für afrikanische Probleme' fördern. Die im März 2021 eingerichtete Europäische Friedensfazilität (EPF) dürfte jedoch eher eine ungesicherte Waffe auf dem Tisch der EU sein. Sie entwickelt sich zum wichtigsten Finanzierungsinstrument der EU für militärische Aktivitäten außerhalb der EU. Sie wurde als erstes zur Unterstützung der Afrikanischen Union und Mosambiks eingesetzt. Doch viele Entscheidungen mit möglicherweise schwerwiegenden Folgen werden dort überstürzt getroffen. Anstatt Situationen zu stabilisieren, könnte EPF Diktaturen verfestigen und Konflikte schüren, insbesondere wenn sie in Afrika eingesetzt wird.