What works? The African Union's ad hoc approach, the African Standby Force or the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Conflict?

*Jude Cocodia**

Abstract

The African Union (AU) has achieved much in conflict management through its ad hoc approach to peacekeeping. Rather than contend on how to make this approach more effective, African conflict scholars and bureaucrats are now favouring and focusing on the African Standby Force (ASF) and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Conflict (ACIRC). The debates often laud these mechanisms as necessary for effective peacekeeping in Africa without assessing if they can really get the job done. This paper queries the competency of these mechanisms in achieving stability in conflict areas and asks if they can really be more

* Dr Jude Cocodia is a Lecturer with the Niger Delta University Nigeria. He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Nottingham, and is an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. He is a recipient of an International Peace Research Association Foundation research grant. His research interests are in Peace, Conflict Security and Democracy in Africa.

effective than the ad hoc approach? This article contends that emphasis should rather be on improving the ad hoc approach than on the operationalisation of the two new mechanisms. This paper argues that the ad hoc approach has had major successes. The newly established mechanisms, though yet to be tested, will be ineffective in keeping the peace due to their major structural defects.

Keywords: conflict, peacekeeping, African Union, ad hoc approach, contingent character, force integrity, complementarity, subsidiarity

Introduction

The African Union (AU) has come a long way in providing security on the continent. Despite its flaws, it has changed the face of peacekeeping and proven itself able in addressing conflict. The AU has built a sturdy reputation in conflict management through the use of the ad hoc (or context-specific) approach to peacekeeping. However, extant peacekeeping literature is replete with analysis of the AU's two new conflict management mechanisms namely the African Standby Force (ASF) and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Conflict (ACIRC). While the attention given these conflict mechanisms is understandable, given that they are novel, this paper assesses their ability to achieve stability in conflict areas when compared to the ad hoc approach that has worked so far.

The ASF and the ACIRC are usually presented in peacekeeping debates as necessary for effective peacekeeping in Africa as though it has to be one or the other, or both. Authors, such as Romain Esmenjaud, Malte Brosig, Norman Sempijja, and Jason Warner, argue for the ACIRC (Esmenjaud 2014:172–177). Others, such as Peter Fabricius and Andre Roux, favour the ASF (Fabricius 2013; Roux 2013). But both sides fail to question the necessity and efficacy of these mechanisms. This paper raises these issues and argues that emphasis should be on improving the ad hoc approach rather than the operationalisation of the ASF and ACIRC that will be ineffective in stabilising conflict areas due to their inherent deficit in contingent character (the size and composition of the battalions).

The literature review establishes the importance of contingent character to the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. By ensuring missions are robust in size and boast high levels of force integrity (greater troop homogeneity, less troop diversity), the AU's ad hoc approach can achieve consistency in delivering effective peace operations. The chance for success is higher when robust forces with high levels of force integrity are deployed.

The cessation of violence and provision of security serve as this study's working definition of success. For this reason, emphasis is on the military aspect of peace operations since they shoulder the responsibility of security. Peacekeeping literature is short on discussions of force integrity for military effectiveness. To augment for this shortfall, interviews conducted in 2014 with Brigadier James Ellery of the British Army and Colonel Tony Curtis, a US military adviser to the AU were used.

Literature review: AU peacekeeping mechanisms and the role of contingent character in mission effectiveness

Since the creation of the ACIRC in November 2013, authors have either lauded the initiative or advocated for it to be scrapped. While recognising the reason for the creation of the ACIRC and acknowledging the challenges that lie ahead, Esmenjaud (2014:173) points out that the ACIRC 'operates on a reservoir of 5 000 troops, with operational modules in the form of tactical groups of 1 500 personnel. With a minimum initial autonomy of 30 days, those units must be able to deploy rapidly within a maximum period of ten days'. The reason for adopting this model, as noted by Esmenjaud, was to enable the ACIRC to deploy in an immediate manner. He concluded that the ACIRC was not just a response to the AU's inertia in Mali, but it was also an opportune adaptation (Esmenjaud 2014). Apparently rapid deployment was regarded as a more important objective of the ACIRC than effectiveness. But what good then is it to rush into battle and then realise you are ill-equipped to handle it?

Brosig and Sepijja argue that the ACIRC can and should be a force complementing that of the ASF. But working together is being prevented by various factors, such as opposition of some member states, funding gaps

and integrating the ACIRC into the AU's existing security structures. They argued that, through its continent-wide reach, the ACIRC makes up for a major shortfall of each ASF Force that can only deploy within its sub-region. The ACIRC therefore provides the AU with a continental instrument that fills the gap created by the lapses of the ASF (Brosig and Sempijja 2015).

Jason Warner contends that the ACIRC will not infringe on the performance of the ASF and identifies three areas where they differ. First, the ACIRC fulfils only one specific gap of the ASF's mandate, namely its rapid deployment capability. So it does not serve as a wholesale replacement. Secondly, the ASF and ACIRC differ in troop size and they differ on how troops will be drawn for combat. Thirdly, both are to be funded differently. While the ASF is funded largely by AU member states and the African Peace Fund, individual member states will primarily fund the ACIRC. Warner argues further that since the ACIRC does not impede the development of the ASF, the ACIRC is a laudable stopgap mechanism for continental rapid deployment (Warner 2015).

Contrary to Warner, Solomon Dersso (cited in Jobson and Smith 2014) warns that – considering the funding capacity of the AU – focus on the ACIRC would draw attention and funding away from the ASF (also see Fabricius 2015). Andre Roux (2013) contends that a regionally controlled ACIRC would undermine the ASF forces. Some others contend that considering many African states such as Nigeria were opposed to the ACIRC, and that more than half of the member states default on their payment of annual dues to the AU, asking member states to incur the additional expense of footing the bill of the ACIRC alongside the ASF will be asking too much.

There is still considerable confusion about how exactly the ASF and ACIRC relate to each other, for as Comfort Ero (cited in Jobson and Smith 2014:4) notes, the fundamentals are not very different for both of these forces. Fabricius (2013) notes that whatever structure is put in place will require that countries provide the capacity for it. He observed that there were plans in 2015 of subsuming the ACIRC into the ASF, but this was avoided to save face. A major challenge of the ACIRC is that funding is largely dependent on individual member states, and the lack of political will that pervades the AU

has kept the ACIRC grounded since it was conceived. Roux (2013) queried the existence of the ACIRC which he termed a 'duplicate structure' (Roux 2013:2). He argued that 'although Africa and the AU have long needed such a capability, it is essentially a duplication of the Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) which is structured within the AS … The glaring question is why a duplicate structure is considered necessary?' He noted that the critical enablers lacked by the ASF, such as medium and heavy airlift capacity to rapidly deploy, would also be faced by the ACIRC. He averred that focusing on bringing the RDC to full operational levels within the ASF would make more sense than running a new independent structure (Roux 2013).

These views reflect the position of most authors on the issue. AU peacekeeping literature has focused on comparing both mechanisms with the intention of justifying or debunking the need of the ACIRC to run alongside the ASF. In arguing for the complementarity or duplication of these mechanisms, authors indirectly accept and endorse these mechanisms without first examining if they really stand a chance of improving peacekeeping and providing stability in conflict areas.

There are multiple factors that contribute in varying measure to the effectiveness of peace operations. These include: funding which oils the peacekeeping machinery; international political will which provides legitimacy for the operation and sustains mission capacity; mandate which dictates the conduct, sphere and objective of the operation; mission leadership which determines the level of troop discipline and civil-military relations; training of peacekeepers which determines troop professionalism; timing of intervention which impacts on the number of lives saved; and mineral resources of the conflict area which influences the intensity of the conflict (Jett 2001; Cocodia 2018).

While the ACIRC and the ASF are influenced by some of these factors, contingent character, which comprises the size and composition of peacekeeping military units, is a factor that both mechanisms are lacking. When a peacekeeping contingent is lacking both in size and force integrity, the likelihood of failure is high (Cocodia and Paki 2016:60). The following sections of this review bring

to the fore the importance of contingent size and force integrity, and why without them peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are likely to fail.

The size factor

Since the majority of violent conflicts from the end of the cold war have been intrastate conflicts, authors in support of robust peace operations are of the view that these are better settled with some degree of force (Walter 1997:336; Donald 2002:21; O'Hanlon 2003:10; Holt and Berkman 2006:93–94; Williams 2010:3). When intervention has been approved, it should be done with a large contingent to project force credibility (Walter 1997 and 2001; Dobbins et al. 2005). Supporting this position, Michael O'Hanlon (2003) and Hultman, Kathman and Shannon (2013) asserted that though a smaller number of elite soldiers can sometimes handle discreet tasks, the broader problem of stabilising a country requires significant forces. For such stability operations and difficult missions, a modest intervening force will need an average of one soldier for every 200 members of a country's civilian population (O'Hanlon 2003). In some cases, the recommended ratio is 1:50 or 1:100 (see Chivvis and Martini 2014).

The reason for this is to ensure that intervening forces are 'comparable in number to the largest likely internal foe they might face. With comparable numbers, as well as superior skills, mobility, and firepower, intervening forces will be well placed to dominate the ensuing battles' (O'Hanlon 2003:31). Similarly, Dobbins and others (2005:232) point out that peace operations with lower force-to-population ratios have been accompanied by much higher casualty levels, and missions with high casualty levels are usually the least successful. Victoria Holt and Tobias Berkman noted that 'an operation with too few forces could limit assistance to civilians outside specifically identifiable areas or exclude those in neighbouring towns'. So, 'once a decision for intervention is reached, it is preferable to send forces promptly and in decisive quantities' (Holt and Berkman 2006:76). 'Such an approach conveys resolve, discourages resistance and improves the odds of success' (O'Hanlon 2003:10). This is reaffirmed in the United Nations (UN) report which states that, 'no amount of good intentions can substitute for the fundamental ability

to project credible force' (United Nations General Assembly and Security Council 2000:1).

The size of peacekeeping contingents certainly matters in addressing conflict. Based on this premise, entrusting the provision of security in a war torn area to just 5 000 troops is as good as preparing a mission for failure or making the conflict drag on. Michael O'Hanlon (2003) and James Dobbins and others (2005) argue that the broader problem of stabilising a country requires significant forces. For such stability operations and difficult missions, a modest intervening force will need an average of one soldier for every 200 civilians. In some cases, a ratio of 1:50 has been proposed (Dobbins et al. 2005). In line with the larger troop to civilian ratio (1:200), a 5 000 strong ASF will be effective in keeping the peace in an area with a population of 1 000 000 people. The ACIRC, in deploying 1 500 troops at any given time, will be effective in conflict areas with approximately 300 000 people. Considering that even the smallest states in Africa boast of populations four times this number, it is difficult to conceive these forces being effective in stabilising conflict areas. The AU's peace operation in the Comoros in 2008 that was brisk and effective had a peacekeeper-civilian ratio of 1:185. The mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), as at 2016, had a ratio of 1:593, and stability has been elusive since conflict broke in 2013 (Cocodia 2018:86 and 184).

Large contingents are not only necessary to ensure military victories or force the peace in arenas of uncooperative factions, the size of a contingent also enhances its peacekeeping role as a sturdy assurance mechanism and provides credibility to peace settlements (Williams 2010:3–5). On the various debates why civil strife often seems intractable, one line of thought contends that it is as a result of each faction being sceptical of the other reneging on negotiated settlements. In the absence of a guarantor powerful enough to ensure that they abide by the rule, the parties keep fighting (Walter 1997:340).

The force integrity factor

Large however does not necessarily translate to effectiveness in military terms and this is clearly expressed by military experts. For a military unit to be

effective there must be force integrity. Force integrity exists when troops share several aspects in common, such as language, religion, culture and background (Cocodia and Paki 2016:46; Cocodia 2018:27). A deficit in force integrity exists when a contingent is made up from many Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), giving rise to diverse modes of operation and interests which hinder effectiveness (Hardt 2010:151; Pavšič 2013:3). Just as sharing language, culture, religion and values bond people, difference in these areas can create numerous obstacles ranging from acceptable meals to gender discrimination. It becomes difficult and expensive creating a cohesive force from widely disparate nationalities (Feldman 2008). Cultural and social diversity within units do not augur well for mission efficacy. This becomes worse when certain units share cultural and religious affiliations with spoilers within the mission area (Forsberg 2008; Zirker 2008). Peacekeeping units will find it difficult to develop a common doctrine, and common systems, tactics, techniques and procedures. This is because greater diversity reduces the bond that motivates the coordination of troops to achieve set goals (Lee 2005:84–85).

A classic example is the African Union–United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) that had 19 500 troops from 47 countries as at 2015. With just four of these TCCs contributing over a thousand troops and the majority contributing less than two hundred, it was one of the most ineffective peace operations run by the UN/AU in Africa from its inception in 2007 (Cocodia 2018:151). Petra Pavšičnoted that these diverse backgrounds have been a barrier for UNAMID's units (Pavšič 2013:3). The low degree of literacy alongside culture and religious variance made cohesion difficult (Feldman 2008:268–269). And as observed by Daniel Hampton (2014:2), 'poor cohesion of the collective is a recurring constraint to sustainable peacekeeping capability'

There is the contention that as the number of actors contributing resources increases, contributor-specific benefits become more diluted. This encourages free-riding and generates higher mission shortfalls, because having a larger number of contributors reduces the marginal gains for a country of adding one additional troop to the mission. The point made here is, as the number of TCCs increase, mission deficits also increase (Passmore et al. 2018:5).

Drawing on these arguments and the relevance of contingent character to achieving mission objectives, this article makes a case for the relative success of the ad hoc approach of the AU and why the ACIRC and the ASF will be ineffective.

Limitations of the ASF

The operationalisation of the ASF was planned for 2008, but deferred to 2010, and then to 2013 and to 2015. Security experts were unsure that the force would be operational before the end of 2015 (Okeke 2016:97). This fear was confirmed by Ibrahim Gambari, who in leading a panel assessing the readiness of the ASF in 2013, told the AU that the force will not be ready by its deadline of 2015 (The African Report 2014). A major reason given for this setback was the unpreparedness of the North and Central forces owing to a lack of cooperation and instability within member states (Ani 2018). The forces of the other three regions, West, East and South, had purportedly reached operational status. However, the 2012 conflict in Mali showed this to be untrue as the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) could not be deployed for lack of readiness. So if after fourteen years of planning the ASF was finally declared operational in February 2016, yet lacking its RDC which was the major reason for its conception, then the rationale for its existence ceases.

The RDC deficit of the ASF has robbed it of any justification as an effective replacement for the ad hoc approach. Arguably, the ASF's premature operationalisation was a strategy by the AU to propitiate its donors in view of the fourteen years and over US$1 billion invested in it. In reference to funding the ASF, Plaut (2014) notes:

> The United States lavished money on what was described as the African Peace and Security Architecture providing $500 million to train up to 50,000 African troops. British involvement was also substantial, with more than £110 million a year being invested via the African Conflict Prevention Pool for nearly a decade. 'As at December 2013' the figure stands at £51.5 million.The Pool is a joint initiative run by the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and DFID.

These donations are outside funds provided by other major partners – the EU, Germany and France. Given that such massive investments had to be justified, declaring the ASF fully operational was likely due to political pressures rather than field demands. In lacking its RDC, the major reason for its existence, the time and resources put into the ASF were not worth it.

One reason given for the delay of the ASF was that each of the 5 000 strong regional forces had to be combat-ready for the ASF to get operational. The excuse was that the delay by the north and central regions to establish standby forces frustrated plans to activate the continental force (The East African 2013). This excuse was tenable in the years immediately following inception of the ASF in 2004 when the ASF forces were designed to operate outside their Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The excuse however ceased to matter from the moment the ASF planners earmarked each brigade to deploy only within its region. In view of this revised concept of operations (CONOPS), what happens when conflicts occur in the northern and central African regions where the forces are not ready? On this score, the ad hoc approach whose flexibility allows contingents to be deployed anywhere on the continent, has the advantage. This is evident from the AU's ad hoc peace operations that have been conducted in West, East and Central Africa.

Even when conflicts occur in regions with operational forces, where the RECs have control over the ASF forces within their jurisdiction, the ad hoc approach has the advantage of gaining more international recognition than the ASF. This situation was borne out of a suspicion that the AU was wielding too much power and has been a source of friction between the AU and its RECs (see Roux 2013). A case in point is the February 2013 peace operation in Mali where political tensions between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU contributed significantly to the three-month delay in deploying peacekeepers. Though ECOWAS had promptly devised an intervention plan when the conflict broke out in Mali, the UN mandated it to be an AU mission. This led to the formation of the African-led International Support Mission toMali (AFISMA) which was under the control of the AU but later became the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (Cocodia 2018:128). This experience shows that

the major actors on the continent are more comfortable dealing with the AU than with its RECs.

The decentralisation of command and autonomy of the regional forces count as advantages of the ASF in consonance with the arguments of burden sharing and of knowing the terrain and politics of the area better (Møller 2005:5). However, the ad hoc system which is more flexible, less complex and centrally run with less interference from RECs is still more attractive as it can also ensure that troops solicited and deployed are mainly from within the region of the conflict area. AFISMA is a case in point, as the bulk of troops deployed were from West Africa.

Connected to the last point is the issue of subsidiarity. A major aim of the subsidiarity principle is to regulate the powers of the central authority in relation to its units, thereby giving priority to the units. The responsibility to take action is passed to the centre only when there is certainty of its greater efficiency or when the unit has shown its inability to deliver. Subsidiarity has been proposed as the main principle for governing inter-institutional relationships between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) of the AU and its RECs. This relationship consists of three facets: decision making, division of labour and burden sharing. Though the idea of division of labour and burden sharing is attractive, there is a lack of consensus within the AU on how this is to be implemented (De Sousa 2013:1). This has been a major issue with the ASF ever since it was conceived. In contrast however, the ad hoc approach where command is centralised in the AU is free of the drawbacks of subsidiarity and inter-institutional hegemonic tussles (Cocodia 2016:11–12). Ad hoc operations cut the RECs out of the decision making cycle. 'It also makes it easier for the AU to deploy troops because they are deployed at the behest of the AU Peace and Security Council' (AUPSC) (Curtis 2014).

Limitations of the ACIRC

The fourteen AU member states that signed up to establish and support the ACIRC are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The formation of the ACIRC was prompted by the failure of the ASF in 2012 to deploy in Mali and stop the advance of the rebels from the north of the country toward the capital Bamako. Proponents of the ACIRC argue that it was created to complement the ASF. The concept of the ACIRC is based on a reservoir of 5 000 troops operational as tactical combat units of 1 500. Each combat unit is comprised of three infantry battalions, an artillery support group and light armour elements, as well as an air wing of 400 troops (Warner 2015:60). Any of these combat units of 1 500 troops can be deployed at any one time within 14 days of mandate authorisation to curtail the violence in conflict areas pending when a larger contingent can be deployed (Roux 2013).

The ACIRC since its inception in May 2013 has been greeted with mixed reactions from academics, bureaucrats and field/military experts. Colonel Tony Curtis states:

> When the AU first made this new concept public and briefed it to the Ministers and the Chiefs of Defence prior to the AU summit, the idea was slammed. The Ministers and Chiefs did not like it … but lo and behold, they have the actual AU summit, they bring it up to the presidents, and the Heads of State overwhelmingly approve of it. They approve something their Chiefs and Ministers rejected (Curtis 2014).

The Gambari Report which gave life to the ACIRC recommended that it could run alongside the ASF. This report provided the middle ground as it aimed to pacify the Chiefs of Defence of AU member states and their Heads of State. Such political compromise was against the expectation that 'the Commission would go in and look at the ASF and the ACIRC, compare them, evaluate them, contrast them and then make a determination on which one was the better course of action' (Curtis 2014). So, the ACIRC was borne more out of political compromise than conflict realities.

The political undertones behind the formation of the ACIRC have not served it well and this has created resistance within the AU to its deployment (Fabricius 2013). Financing the ACIRC has always been questioned and the Kaberuka proposal, aimed at improving internal funding within the AU, will be unable to address this issue. The Kaberuka proposal advocates imposing a 0.2% tax on

imports coming into the continent with the view that the internally generated revenue will enable the AU to finance 25% of the cost of its peace operations by 2020 (African Union 2016; UNSC 2016). Challenges facing the implementation of this proposal include: the uncertainty of funding by member states through their central banks; the political will to see it through if more than half of the AU member states default on the payment of their annual dues. A majority of states are already defaulting on the payment of this levy (Institute for Security Studies 2017). What further compounds the issues, is the assertion by the World Trade Organisation and the US that the levy is illegal and contravenes international trade rules (Mwai 2017; Apiko and Aggad 2018). In the face of these obstacles, it is hard to see how funds from the Kaberuka proposal can be used to finance the ACIRC.

The structure of the ACIRC points to a deficit in force integrity, given its wide diversity and small combat units. An intervention force made up of troops from a region will possess stronger bonds than one composed of small troop contingents from different regions. On this score, the flexibility of the ad hoc system gives it the advantage that it can secure troops from the region or neighbouring states with the goal of fostering force integrity. Unlike the ACIRC, the ad hoc approach affords the advantage of increased knowledge of local conditions through deploying troops from neighbouring countries.

Even if the ACIRC were ready to deploy, it will only offer short-lived respite at best. Military personnel connected with its development have acknowledged gaps in funding and strategic airlifts. Brigadier Chris Gildenhuys (2016:1) notes that the ACIRC 'should be able to intervene in a robust way and sustain operations for at least 90 days when an AU or UN force will take over to bring about sustainable peace and stability'. If the AU force referred to is the ASF, there are no guarantees it would be ready to take over from the ACIRC since its capacity for rapid deployment will remain out of reach for the foreseeable future (De Albuquerque 2016). If an ad hoc arrangement is meant to relieve the ACIRC, it queries why the ad hoc mechanism was not primed to deploy at the start in the first instance. Banking on a UN takeover leaves too much uncertainty. The UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) took over from the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) 67 days after the scheduled date of

25 March 2004. Twelve years into peacekeeping in Somalia, the UN is yet to take over from the AU. On issues of practicability, the unpredictability of the model is a major flaw (Lotze 2016:82). The uncertainty on what happens after the 90-day sustainability period of the ACIRC challenges the workability of this project.

The relative success of ad hoc missions

The ad hoc approach to peacekeeping simply consists in soliciting troops from willing member states to address conflicts anywhere on the continent. The AU has been quite effective at peace operations using this approach. Apart from the AU's peacekeeping misfortune in Darfur and CAR, it was quite effective in Burundi, Comoros, Somalia and Mali. In these missions, size and force integrity were integral to their outcomes (Cocodia 2018:65, 86 and 108).

Contingent character and the effectiveness of the AU's ad hoc approach

The table below provides a strong rationale for large contingents which neither the ASF nor ACIRC are, but which the ad hoc approach conveniently accommodates. The reason for sizeable contingents is to ensure that intervening forces are 'comparable in number to the largest likely internal foe they might face. With comparable numbers, as well as superior skills, mobility, and firepower, intervening forces would be well placed to dominate the ensuing battles' (O'Hanlon 2003:31). Operations with too few troops stand the risk of suffering high casualty rates, and such operations are often among the least successful (Dobbins et al. 2005:232). The experience of AMIS and UNAMID present good examples, as one of the greatest obstacles to their success was the inadequate size of the contingents (The Guardian 2009). If at mission peak with 19 555 troops, UNAMID was unable to provide security in Darfur, the more difficult job of stabilising conflict areas with contingents as small as those provided by the ASF and ACIRC is impossible. Beyond providing security, a shortage in troops also limits assistance to civilians, especially those outside specifically identifiable areas, and this contributes to instability. Table 1 provides data on size of contingent and force integrity of the AU's peace

operations. Size is measured using troop-civilian ratios, and force integrity is measured using force size as against the number of TCCs.

Table 1. Peacekeeper-Civilian distribution outcomes

Peace-keeping Operation	African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	African Electoral and Security Assistance Mission (MAES)	African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	African-led International Support Missionin Mali (AFISMA) and France's Operation Serval troops	African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and France's Operation Sangaris troops
Year	2003–2004	2004–Present	2007–2008	2007–Date	2013	2013–2014
Contingent Peak/ Troop Size	3 000	19 555	1 500	21 524	11 400	9 350
No. of TCCs	3	47	3	6	10	7
Civilian Population	7.2m	7.5m (Darfur, Sudan)	277 500 (Anjouan, Comoros)	4.68m (South-Central Somalia)	1.6m (Northern Mali)	4.6m
Troop-Civilian Ratio	1:2 300	1:1 000	1:185	1:217	1:140	1:492
Mission Outcome	**Successful**	**Unsuccessful**	**Successful**	**Successful**	**Successful**	**Unsuccessful**

Successful = Meeting basic mission objective of providing security and creating stability.

Unsuccessful = Unable to meet basic mission objective.

Table 1 shows that the missions with the following peacekeeper-civilian ratios: MAES, 1:185; AMISOM, 1:217; AFISMA, 1:140, were successful. This indicates that missions with low troop civilian ratios have a higher propensity for success. Inversely, peace operations with high troop-civilian ratios are likely to fail as depicted by UNAMID, 1:1 000 and MISCA, 1:492. Though, the result for AMIB, 1:2 300 deviates significantly from this trend, this exception is explained by the high level of force integrity that AMIB enjoyed. 'AMIB was made up of 56 percent South African troops and 34 percent Ethiopian troops with Mozambique making up the rest' (Cocodia 2018:66). AMIB possessed a high level of force integrity since South Africa and Ethiopia are English speaking countries which ensured that the language hurdle was overcome.

Considering the role of contingent character in the successes of AMIB, AMISOM, MAES and AFISMA, it is evident that UNAMID and MISCA failed because of poor planning and certain local constraints, and not from any defect of the ad hoc approach (Cocodia 2018:169–170 and 189–191). The success of the ad hoc approach in the intense conflict theatres of Burundi and Somalia shows that it can address conflict anywhere on the continent so long as the international political will exists and proper planning is done with contingent character taken into consideration.

Ad hoc AU peace operations are flexible on contingent size and can be enlarged or reduced in response to ground realities. The impact of this asset is maximised when TCCs deploy their troops in concentrated numbers to a mission rather than spread them unevenly over several missions. In 2016 for example, Senegal had 2 227 troops serving in UNMISS and 795 in UNAMID. UNMISS would have been better served with 3 000 troops from Senegal, while UNAMID would have had one less component undermining its force integrity.

Surprisingly, force integrity has escaped due attention in peacekeeping literature, yet it matters as a major factor in military operations. James Ellery, a retired Brigadier of the British Army who served as Head of the

UN Missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, and as Chief of Staff in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, comments:

> Size is important, but if you make up a troop contingent with many nations it is much weaker … You have obviously got difference in language, logistics, fighting, method, all sorts of things. For example, there is an EU force … and it is made up theoretically of all the nations of the EU ... that is hopeless! Nobody understands what is going on. There is a level below which you must not mix troops. I personally think that level is brigade. Brigade is between 3–5 000 troops, they should be all Nigerians or Kenyans, or Bangladeshi … So a brigade, 5 000 then commanded by a brigadier. That is very effective, no problem at all (Ellery 2013).

With the military size of many African states it will be difficult for TCCs to meet this number of troops for peace operations. However, it is necessary to come as close to it as best possible. The importance of force integrity to peacekeeping outcomes is aptly captured in the composition of AMIB's 2 860 troops where South Africa contributed 1 600, which was 56 percent of the contingent. If lessons are to be learned on factors that facilitate effective peace operations, the flexibility of the ad hoc approach that enables it to expand or reduce its numbers as dictated by situations of the ground make it the more practical peace operations machinery. The AU's mission in Somalia is a good reference point.

Contingent character and the effectiveness of AMISOM

In terms of how effective a large contingent with the resolve to get the job done could be, the AMISOM experience makes a strong case for numbers, but it makes a strong case for force integrity as well. As AMISOM troop strength increased and maintained force integrity in the process, Al-Shabaab was pushed out of Mogadishu and the surrounding areas, thereby stabilising the area (Mills 2014).

AMISOM struggled to make any impact during its first four years for several reasons. One of these reasons was the size of its contingent as countries were slow, and reluctant to deploy their troops (Williams 2013). Up until

September 2010 AMISOM had just 7 200 troops made up largely of troops from Uganda. Though outmanned by the spoilers, the mission did not cede ground as force integrity ensured the mission was sturdy. By December 2010 AMISOM increased its troops size from 8 000 to 12 000 and Ugandan soldiers accounted for 1 800 of this reinforcement, while Burundi sent in 1 000 (Hiiraan Online 2012). Force integrity was preserved alongside contingent size as Uganda and Burundi alone accounted for three quarters of the additional troops. With both these factors taken care of, AMISOM was able to improve on its provision of security. With significant increases in its troop strength from 2011, AMISOM began stamping its authority on the Somali landscape (table 2 shows AMISOM's troop distribution as at January 2015).

Table 2. AMISOM's troop distribution per TCC as at January 2015

Troop Contributing Country	Troop Strength	Assignment Area
Uganda	6 223	Sector 1
Burundi	5 432	Sector 5
Ethiopia	4 395	Sector 3
Kenya	3 664	Sector 2
Djibouti	960	Sector 4
Sierra Leone	850	Sector 2

Source: AMISOM, www.amisom-au.org

The improved provision of security had multiplier effects. It spurred the United Nations Security Council in January 2012 to authorise a further increase of AMISOM's troops to 17 731 (Reuters 2012). It forced the streaming out of foreign fighters from Al-Shabaab (African Union Press Release 2014). It also encouraged the US to step up efforts in training and

equipping AMISOM troops through its African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) programme (Curtis 2014).

Ad hoc approach and international support

There are several military initiatives undertaken by partners of the AU directed at improving its capacity to meet the demands of security on the continent. These initiatives include ACOTA and the European Union Training Mission (EUTM). ACOTA was established by the US in 1997 to train soldiers in peacekeeping. Through this programme, the AU has had a steady supply of skilled peacekeepers for its ad hoc missions without having to expend the resources required in maintaining standby forces. The US partnered with 25 African countries and trained over 248 000 peacekeepers through the programme (US Africa Command 2012). Colonel Curtis (2014) states: 'It is a programme that we use to ensure that troop contributing countries participating in AU missions are adequately trained and equipped to accomplish the task that they are being sent to accomplish'. Similarly, the EUTM has bases in Mali, Somalia and CAR. Its major objective is to contribute to the EU's effort in advising, teaching and training the Armed Forces of these countries and strengthen their ability to contribute to the defence of their territory and the protection of their own population. Through these missions, the EU seeks to stabilise countries facing state weakness caused by intrastate conflict. Doing this in partnership with the AU, they help the organisation meet its security objectives on the continent.

Other externally aided programmes include the Joint Africa-EU Strategy where its 2014–2017 road map gives top priority to peace and security and emphasises support for AU peace operations (Fourth EU-Africa Summit 2014). There is also the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel whose security objective is to strengthen and operationalise national, sub-regional and regional security mechanisms capable of addressing cross-border threats. (UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel 2013:5; Ambrosetti and Esmenjaud 2014:77–80).

The support of these partnerships has bolstered AU expertise in yielding results through its ad hoc approach. Contrary to the belief that a standby force will allow for smoother and more effective AU peace operations, the complexities involved in getting these standby forces operational have made them cumbersome. When the ASF could not be deployed in Mali on 3 January 2013, it took the AU less than 14 days using the ad hoc approach to get boots on the ground by 17 January 2013. This proves that the ad hoc approach is capable of rapid deployment. All it needs is some fine-tuning and the political will to make this characteristic a regular feature of AU operations.

For all the ado about the ASF and the ACIRC, the AU's time-tested ad hoc approach to peace operations still remains the better option. The ad hoc approach might have its operational hiccups, but it is devoid of the structural contingent character deficit of the ASF and ACIRC and is still the more reliable approach to get the job done. Rather than focus on the compatibility or otherwise of the ASF and ACIRC, emphasis should be on making the ad hoc approach more effective and a starting point could be in ensuring that each deployment is adequate in size and sufficient in force integrity.

Conclusion

This paper argues for the sustenance and development of the time-tested ad hoc approach to assembling PKO contingents. In as much as the ad hoc approach to troop recruitment for peace operations has proven itself effective in stabilising conflict areas, the AU should concentrate on fine tuning strategies to make this approach more responsive for rapid deployment. Rapid deployment worked in Mali with the recruitment and deployment of troops under AFISMA. So, rather than take pride in drafting grand plans that become a burden to execute, or that lack the capacity to implement, the AU should focus on planning in line with its resources and realistic objectives.

As it stands, the ASF and ACIRC are rather products of political contrivances than practical combat units designed to effectively address conflict realities on the ground. The ad hoc system, despite its lapses, has been an effective conflict management mechanism. Its setbacks have been due to poor planning rather than inherent flaws. What the ad hoc approach needs to be more effective is a sturdy political will and better planning that ensures robust contingent character.

The capacity of the ad hoc approach to accommodate contingents no matter how large, gives it a major advantage over the ASF and the ACIRC. The capacity to be deployed anywhere on the continent sets it apart from the ASF, and its ability to be sufficient in force integrity gives it the advantage over the ACIRC. It is never too late for the AU to retrace its steps on the ASF and the ACIRC and improve on its ad hoc strategy.

Sources

African Union 2016. Decision on the outcome of the Retreat of the Assembly of the African Union (Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII). Available from: <https://au.int/sites/default/files/pages/31953-file-assembly_au_dec_605_financing_the _au.pdf> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

African Union Press Release 2014. AU special representative applauds new defections from Al-Shabaab. Available from: <http://amisom-au.org/2014/06/au-special-representative-applauds-new-defections-from-al-shabaab/> [Accessed 9 June 2017].

Ambrosetti, David and Romain Esmenjaud 2014. Whose money funds African Peace Operations? Negotiating influence and autonomy with external partners. In: Tardy, Thierry and Marco Wyss eds. *Peacekeeping in Africa: The evolving Security Architecture*. London, Routledge. pp. 73–89.

Ani, Christian 2018. Is the African Standby Force any closer to being deployed? ISS Today, 2 November. Available from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/is-the-african-standby-force-any-closer-to-being-deployed> [Accessed 19 September 2017].

Apiko, Philomena and Fatten Aggad 2018. Analysis of the implementation of the African Union's 0.2% levy: Progress and challenges. European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) Briefing Note, No. 98, February. Available from: <http://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/BN98-Apiko-Aggad-November-2017.pdf> [Accessed 6 April 2019].

Brosig, Malte and Norman Sempijja 2015. The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis: Advice for African policy makers. *Policy Insights* 22. Available from: <https://www.saiia.org.za/policy-insights/860-the-african-capacity-for-immediate-response-to-crisis-advice-for-african-policymakers/file> [Accessed 19 September 2017].

Chivvis, Christopher S. and Jeffrey Martini 2014. *Libya after Qaddafi: Lessons and implications for the future*. Santa Monica, CA, The Rand.

Cocodia, Jude 2016. The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Conflict and the African Standby Force: Options for peace intervention in Africa. African Peacebuilding Network, Working Papers No. 7. Available from: <http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/APN_WorkingPapers_07_Cocodia.pdf> [Accessed 16 April 2016].

Cocodia, Jude 2018. *Peacekeeping and the African Union: Building negative peace.* London, Routledge.

Cocodia, Jude and Fidelis Paki 2016. Achieving stability in African conflicts: The role of contingent size and force integrity'. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 6 (1), pp. 45–68.

De Albuquerque, Adriana Lins 2016. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) – Discussing the remaining challenges. Swedish Ministry of Defence (FOI), Report 4301SE, October. p. 19.

De Coning, Cedric, Linea Gelot and John Karlsrud eds. 2016. *The future of African peace operations*. London, Zed Books.

De Sousa, Ricardo Real P. 2013. African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Subsidiarity and the Horn of Africa: The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). A paper delivered at the conference on State and societal challenges in the Horn of Africa: Conflict and processes of state formation, reconfiguration and disintegration, Centre of African Studies (CEA)/ISCTE-IUL, 29 April 2013, University Institute of Lisbon.

Dobbins, James, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Andrew Rathmell and Brett Steele 2005. *The UN's role in nation-building: From the Congo to Iraq*. Santa Monica, CA, The Rand Corporation.

Donald, Dominick 2002. Neutrality, impartiality and UN Peacekeeping at the beginning of the 21st century. *International Peacekeeping*, 9 (4), pp. 21–38.

Esmenjaud, Romain 2014. The African capacity for immediate response to crisis: Conceptual breakthrough or anti-imperialist phantom? *African Security Review*, 23 (2), pp. 172–177.

Fabricius, Peter 2013. Does the unwieldy label of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises conceal a real determination to act?' Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, 7 November. Available from: <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/does-the-unwieldy-label-of-the-african-capacity-for-immediate-response-to-crisis-conceal-a-real-determination-to-act> [Accessed 5 September 2014].

Fabricius, Peter 2015. Standing by or standing up: Is the African Standby Force nearly ready for action? *ISS Today*, 23 July. Available from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/standing-by-or-standing-up-is-the-african-standby-force-nearly-ready-for-action> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

Feldman, Robert 2008, Problems plaguing the African Union Peacekeeping Forces. *Defense and Security Analysis*, 24 (3), pp. 267–279.

Forsberg, Erika 2008. Polarisation and ethnic conflict in a widened strategic setting. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45 (2), pp. 283–300.

Fourth EU-Africa Summit 2014. Roadmap 2014–2017. Brussels, 2–3 April. Available from: <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014_04_01_4th_eu-africa_summit_roadmap_en.pdf> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

Gildenhuys, Chris 2015. African capacity of immediate response to crisis. *African Defense*, 11 December. Available from: <http://www.african-defense.com/interesting-post/4778/>

Hampton, Daniel 2014. Creating sustainable peacekeeping capability in Africa. *Africa Security Brief*, 27 April. Available from: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ASB27EN-Creating-Sustainable-Peacekeeping-Capability-in-Africa.pdf> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

Hardt, Heidi 2010. African solutions to European problems: Conditioning cooperation among International Organisations on peace operations in Europe and Africa. In: Galbreath, David, J. and Carmen Gebhard eds. *Cooperation or conflict? Problematizing organisational overlap in Europe*. Surrey, Ashgate. pp. 139–160.

Hiiraan Online 2012. UN unveils new look AMISOM as Kenya joins up. *Hiiraan Online*, 12 February. Available from: <http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2012/Feb/22670/un_unveils_new_look_amisom_as_kenya_joins_up.aspx#sthash.oOSxLveq.dpbs> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

Holt, Victoria K. and Tobias C. Berkman 2006. *The impossible mandate? Military preparedness, the responsibility to protect and modern peace operations*. Washington, D.C., The Henry L. Stimson Centre.

Hultman, Lisa, Jacob Kathman and Megan Shannon 2013. United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection in civil war. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57 (4), pp. 1–17.

Institute for Security Studies (ISS) 2017. Will AU members manage to pay their dues? ISS Today, 17 March. Available from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/will-au-members-manage-to-pay-their-dues> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

Jett, Dennis 2001. *Why peacekeeping fails*. Palgrave, New York.

Jobson, Elissa and Smith, Patrick 2014. African Union: Building the Pax Africana. The Africa Report, 30 January. Available from: <http://www.theafricareport.com/North-Africa/african-union-building-the-pax-africana.html> [Accessed 3 July 2015].

Lee, Terence 2005. Military cohesion and regime maintenance: Explaining the role of the military in 1989 China and 1998 Indonesia. *Armed Forces and Society*, 32 (1), pp. 80–104.

Lotze, Walter 2016. Mission support for African peace operation. In: De Coning, Gelot and Karlsrud 2016, pp. 76–89.

Mills, Greg 2014. AMISOM – An African success story? The Brenthurst Foundation. Available from: <http://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/a_sndmsg/news_view.asp?I=128773&PG=227> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

Møller, Bjørn 2005. The pros and cons of subsidiarity: The Role of African Regional and Subregional Organisations in ensuring peace and security in Africa. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) Working Paper No 2005/4.

Mwai, Collins 2017. African States drag feet on Kaberuka AU Funding Mechanism Proposal. The New Times, 27 January. Available from: <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/207458> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

O'Hanlon, Michael 2003. *Expanding global military capacity for humanitarian intervention*. Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press.

Okeke, Jide M. 2016. United in challenges? The African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises. In: De Coning, Gelot and Karlsrud 2016, pp. 90–104.

Passmore, Timothy, Megan Shannon and Andrew Hart 2018. Rallying the troops: Collective action and self-interest in UN peacekeeping contribution. *Journal of Peace Research*, 55 (3), pp. 1–14.

Pavšič, Petra 2013. The African Union: A noble idea or an effective provider of peace and security on the African continent? *Consultancy Africa Intelligence*, 16 January. Available from: <http://www.consultancyafrica.com/> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

Plaut, Martin 2014. Why is the AU still failing its people on peace and security? *African Arguments*, 9 January. Available from: <http://africanarguments.org/2014/01/09/why-is-the-african-union-still-failing-its-people-on-peace-and-security-by-martin-plaut/> [Accessed 3 July 2015].

Reuters 2012. UN Council approves increase in AU Somalia force. 22 February. Available from: <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE81L0CF20120222?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&pageNumber=2&virtualBrandChannel=0> [Accessed 3 July 2015].

Roux, Andre 2013. New super combat brigade: Creation of an African elite? Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 14 June. Available from: <http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/new-super-combat-brigade-creation-of-an-african-elite> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

The East African 2013. Deadline for African Standby Force now 2015. *The East African*, January. Available from: <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Deadline-for-African-Standby-Force-now-2015/-/2558/1676156/-/3yiaih/-/index.html> [Accessed 1 July 2018].

The Guardian 2009. The Failure of UNAMID. *The Guardian*, 1 January. Available from: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jan/01/darfur> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

United Nations General Assembly and Security Council 2000. Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809), 21 August.

United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel 2013. (S/2013/354). Available from: <https://oses.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/united_nations_integrated_strategy_for_the_sahel_s-2013-354.pdf> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

United Nations Security Council 2016. Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 2320 (2016) Welcoming cost-sharing proposal, stronger cooperation between United Nations, African Union (SC/12595), 18 November. Available from: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sc12595.doc.htm> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

United States Africa Command 2012. U.S. Africa Command Fact Sheet: Africa contingency operations training and assistance. Available from: <https://www.google.comng/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjtvvPO3d3U

AhUCLcAKHdDLAH8QFgggMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.africom.mil%2FDoc%2F9836&usg=AFQjCNFWCL92QzJUe2- nBFtYtLQWo8AaPw> [Accessed 6 April 2018].

Walter, Barbara 2001. *Committing to peace: The successful settlement of civil wars*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press.

Walter, Barbara F. 1997. A critical barrier to civil war settlement. *International Organization*, 51 (3), pp. 335–364.

Warner, Jason 2015. Complements or competitors? The African Standby Force, The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises, and the future of rapid reaction forces in Africa. *African Security*, 8 (1), pp. 56–73.

Williams, Paul D. 2010. Lessons learned from peace operations in Africa. *Africa Security Brief*, Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, No. 3, March.

Williams, Paul, D. 2013. The African Union Mission in Somalia and civilian protection challenges. *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2 (2) (2013). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.bz> [Accessed 3 July 2015].

Zirker, Daniel, Constantine P. Danopoulos and Alan Simpson 2008. The Military as a distinct or quasi-ethnic identity in developing countries. *Armed Forces and Society*, 34 (2), pp. 314–337.

Interviews

Curtis, Tony 2014. Senior Military Advisor of the US Mission to the AU. Interview at Paradise Garden, Adam's Pavilion, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 5 April 2014.

Ellery, James 2013. Retired Brigadier of the British Army. Served as Head of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 1999, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Chief of Staff in 2001, and Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in 2006. Interview at Queens Gate, SW7 London, on 15 November 2013.