



Crafting an African security architecture: Addressing regional peace and conflict in the 21st century

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Comprising twelve chapters on eclectically chosen topics ranging from Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), Security sector reform (SSR), and Responsibility to Protect (R2P) to Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, this book combines geo-political expertise of the North and the South in an analysis of peace and security challenges facing the African continent. The book provides valuable reading for policy makers, scholars,

and researchers in international relations, political science, peace and security studies as well as conflict resolution. The book assesses African regional security institutions and mechanisms for peace. First, it explores the nature of conflicts in Africa and underscores the observation, common in current literature, about the prevalence and proliferation of intra-state conflicts in Africa since the end of the Cold War in 1989. Second, the book also examines the root causes of conflicts in Africa including poverty, underdevelopment, weak states and crises of governance.

Chapter 1, by Besada, Goertz and Werner, launches into the debate about the Responsibility to Protect by providing a background to the emergence of the concept, and by discussing how African regional organisations are best suited to intervene in conflicts in the continent since they are bound to be more affected security-wise if they do not intervene. The authors credit African regional organisations for possessing knowledge of the local terrain and political dynamics, and of the challenges inherent in selling the concept to national governments and regional organisations. According to the authors, the scepticism that characterises the South's perception of R2P was mainly caused by the way it was introduced in a top-down manner. Although the authors aptly problematise the concept of R2P, they conclude rather loftily that the human security concept is not a good analytical framework for conceptualising R2P. They argue for a better framework that comprises 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' (p. 10). What this means in reality, however, is far from clear.

In Chapter 2, Schmidt compares the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) approaches to integration, using integration theory as a theoretical framework. In highlighting the strengthening role of the AU, the author unpacks but dismisses the concept of 'the United States of Africa', arguing that the continent is characterised by autocracies, pseudo-democracies and failed states, a reality which differs significantly from the European Union's 'club of democracies' (p. 25). Although Schmidt acknowledges that the AU is an 'unprecedented experiment', which has made great progress in the peace and security realm, he also underscores that 'the AU is largely an elite project that lacks broad participation' (p. 15). He reaches this conclusion from

observations of some of the AU's institutions of peace and security, including the Assembly of the African Union, the Pan African Parliament (PAP), and the African Union Commission (AUC), which he labels as 'ambivalent'. However, one weakness in this analysis is that the actual differences between the AU and EU are not illustrated well.

Chapter 3, by Cilliers, provides an overview of the African peace and security architecture (APSA), focusing on the root causes of the conflicts and the milestones that the African Union has accomplished in institutionalising peace and security. The author attempts to understand why many armed conflicts in the 21st century are taking place in Africa (although he also acknowledges a reduction in the number of violent conflicts in Africa). He employs an economic perspective, and identifies poverty and underdevelopment as key to the prevalence of conflict and instability in the region, apart from the structural weakness of the African state. Case studies of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Zimbabwe are presented as examples of the failure of the state and its linkage with instability. However, on a positive note, Cilliers observes greater involvement by African leaders in fostering peace and security through peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives in the continent, as evidenced by the work of institutions such as the AU Peace and Security Council, the AU Panel of the Wise and the evolving AU Standby Force. However, Cilliers singles out particular case studies of Kenya and Zimbabwe as instances where African institutions were not as forthcoming, concerted and vociferous in supporting the will of the people in the event of conflict-ridden elections (p. 43).

In Chapter 4, Ebo and Powel discuss the concept of security sector reform (SSR), and call for multilateralism of the people to drive the agenda instead of multilateralism of the states. They also discuss the shift from state-centric and territorial security towards notions of human security which include economic, political and environmental security of all citizens. They highlight the changing nature of SSR – towards more emphasis on poverty reduction, good governance, civil-military relations and increased confidence in state security institutions. Essentially, this chapter draws attention to the need for non-state actors to play prominent roles in SSR programmes, hence

the notions of local ownership and broad-based participation. The authors further analyse the normative frameworks for SSR within the African Union and the United Nations, including the AU's 2007 Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), which underscores the AU's regional approach to SSR and the United Nations' broad conception of SSR as outlined in the Millennium Development Declaration and the 2008 Report of the Secretary-General on SSR, among other documents. Despite observing the wealth of supportive documents on the subject of security, the authors in this chapter are also critical of both the AU and the UN's ad hoc approaches to SSR, limited finances, the challenges of multilateral bureaucracy as well as limited capacities within the institutions' various departments to coordinate the SSR agenda.

Chapter 5, by Gaenzle and Grimm, analyses the geo-strategic importance of Africa to the North, Far East and Middle East, which has led to the renewed interest in and support for the continent's peace and security architecture. Several factors that make Africa a subject of foreign intervention such as the allure of the continent's natural resources and the African population's role as a market for foreign goods, are taken into account. The chapter focuses on bilateral and multilateral forms of support that have been rendered to APSA, including the European Union's increasing role in supporting peace and security initiatives via regional organisations and nation states. The authors also outline a number of key initiatives for peace and security that have been launched by Africans themselves as well as through partnerships with donors. However, the authors are cautious of the conditionalities that often accompany such forms of support, including the westernised models and prescriptions for peace and security that might not always meet the approval of African leaders. In addition, the authors explore the historical legacies of colonialism on the current EU-Africa partnerships in peace and security. The chapter is well written, although it paints quite a pessimistic picture of Africa, given the usage of phrases such as the 'dark continent,' or 'lost continent' (p. 73)

In Chapter 6, Siebert focuses on one of the most under-discussed regional economic communities, namely the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development (IGAD) and its role in the Somalia and Sudan conflicts. He defines R2P and highlights the concept's characteristics or principles, concluding that it is a broad, all-encompassing, multidimensional doctrine that can be utilised and interpreted in various ways (p. 91). Siebert is sceptical about the effectiveness of IGAD, arguing that it is one of the weakest links in the African peace and security architecture. He explains that Sudan is one major hindrance to IGAD's embracing of R2P given the country's vociferous opposition to interference in matters of state sovereignty. He also observes that despite the lack of explicit mention of R2P in IGAD documents, there have been moves towards affirmation of R2P principles by IGAD, as a result of concerted advocacy by civil society in the Horn of Africa. The chapter is well written and presents a precise analysis of the challenges of implementing R2P in a region ridden by conflict and competing interests of member states.

Chapter 7, by Curtis and Nibigirwe, looks at UN-AU cooperation in peacekeeping – using the transition of the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) to the United Nations Mission in Burundi (ONUB) as a case study. The authors hail praises at AMIB, which was deployed in April 2003, as the first case of African peacekeeping which came at a time when international political will towards peacekeeping in Africa was scarce. The chapter is one of the optimistic segments of the book, which acknowledges the role of African peacekeeping missions in setting the tone and context for subsequent UN peacekeeping involvement in the continent. Despite the authors' optimism about AMIB being an epitome of African readiness to conduct peacekeeping in the context of UN's unwillingness and inability, the chapter is cognisant of the challenges of an under-funded and under-capacitated peacekeeping mission, as AMIB was. The authors recount how in May 2004, AMIB was replaced by the United Nations Mission in Burundi (ONUB) and conclude that collaboration of the UN and the AU in Burundi witnessed improvements in coordination and delivery. Overall, this chapter draws our attention to the onerous yet possible task of evaluating success in peacekeeping missions. Finally, the authors satisfactorily highlight the several indicators of success which include maintenance of security, facilitation of the peace process,

enabling of post-conflict reconstruction as well as providing opportunities to transform violence into peace.

Chapter 8, by Mahmoud, focuses on the triadic partnership between the African Union, the United Nations and the South African facilitation team during the peace process in Burundi. The goal of this chapter is clear – to demonstrate how integrated peace processes can have more far-reaching results as each actor brings a unique vantage point into the process. The author emphasises the utmost importance of South Africa's contributions in facilitating first the peace process and later the Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activities. He highlights the transformations that have been recorded in Burundi since the involvement of the UN, AU and South Africa in various aspects of the peace process, but also acknowledges the fragility of the peace. Currently, Burundi is undergoing post-conflict recovery with the UN Peacebuilding Fund playing a prominent role, and South Africa continuing its facilitation role in Burundi's peace implementation phase.

In chapter 9, Jaye and Pokoo underscore the role of Disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) and SSR in preventing the resurgence of armed conflict in Liberia. The authors argue that threats to security emerge when there are disaffected populations in a country who have access to small arms, and hence they emphasise the imperative for proper DDRR exercises. The chapter analyses the DDRR and SSR processes in Liberia (November 1994 to April 1996 and December 2003 to October 2004), arguing that although the latter process faced incredible challenges of coordination and funding, it has managed to bring relative peace to Liberia. The authors argue that the first DDRR exercise was largely a failure as evidenced by the resurgence of war between forces loyal to Charles Taylor and those loyal to Prince Johnson. They further posit that the second DDRR and SSR process for Liberia has relatively succeeded because the government, the UN and civil society took corrective measures to address challenges faced in the first exercise. With regard to the ongoing SSR processes in Liberia, they discuss the legal and political aspects as well as the specific technical processes involved. They are however critical of the SSR

processes, and particularly the lack of ownership as well as the politicisation of the process due to the need to appease different factions. This chapter provides a good description of how the DDR and SSR processes in Liberia were implemented, but falls short of making a substantive assessment of the impact of these initiatives. Perhaps, this is not a problem peculiar to this chapter but to several other scholars and researchers wishing to evaluate the impact of highly technical, sensitive and political programmes such as SSR and DDR.

Chapter 10, by Kajee, begins by clarifying the differences between the North Sudan-South Sudan conflict and the North Sudan-Darfur conflict. The author goes to great lengths to contextualise and de-ethnicise the Darfur conflict, dismissing the label of ‘state-sponsored genocide’ (p. 160) and arguing instead that the war in Darfur represents a ‘scorched earth type counter-insurgency aimed at suppressing various armed rebels in the region’ (p. 160). Nonetheless, the chapter also analyses some of the contributing factors to the conflict, including marginalisation of the periphery (Darfur), instrumentalisation of tribal conflict by political elites as well as the geopolitical and resource significance of Darfur for external players. The Responsibility to Protect theme comes in towards the end of the chapter when the author argues that the international community abrogated its responsibility to protect Darfurians from 2003 to 2005 because of a weakly mandated peacekeeping mission. The author criticises the earlier peacekeeping intervention in Darfur, specifically the African Union Missions in Sudan (AMIS I and II) for their weak mandates, inadequate resources and small stature which contributed to fatalities of the peacekeeping mission and failure to achieve set objectives. The author seems to be more persuaded by the performance of the joint mission, namely the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) whose mission was ‘far more robust than that of AMIS’ (p. 170). Despite this positive perception of UNAMID, the author raises a number of logistical and political challenges that faced the peacekeeping mission, some of which were peculiar to its hybrid nature, e.g. challenges of coordination, a weak civilian affairs department as well as the politics of deployment. Towards the end of the

chapter, the author criticises the International Criminal Court indictment of President Al-Bashir over war crimes in Darfur, arguing that this was wrongly timed and might even hinder sustainable peace in Darfur.

In Chapter 11, Franke analyses the background to the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the normative framework guiding this formation. The chapter discusses what the ASF is envisaged to look like in terms of structure, composition and operation. The ASF, in essence, is an attempt to link the African Union, regional organisations and member states in the assembly of a pan-African peacekeeping force. While one gains an understanding of what the ASF is envisaged to be, this chapter is somewhat dry as it merely ‘spells-out’ aspects of the ASF. Nonetheless, towards the end of the chapter, the author gives a critical and substantive analysis of what it means to have a standby force by comparing the ASF to regional brigades such as IGAD’s East Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) and the Economic Community for West African States’ Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), among others. The author concludes that when it comes to regional efforts towards implementing the ASF agenda, the East African and West African regions score highly. Despite milestone achievements, however, the author is aware of the blight of conflict in the Horn of Africa and the Mano River Region. The chapter also analyses the progress made by SADC in its efforts towards establishing the SADC Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG), but is sceptical in the light of challenges this force has to face. Overall, Franke is satisfied with the progress that has been made with regional standby forces, which are ahead of the African Union’s operationalisation of the ASF. He did not articulate, however, why it has been easier for sub-regions to establish standby forces than for the African Union.

In Chapter 12, Hammer focuses on how accountability for peace, governance and security can be fostered in the context of globalisation. He acknowledges the contradictory and double-edged impact of globalisation on political, economic and social life, and cites examples of robust regional organisations that are increasingly playing a role in conflict resolution among their member states. The author discusses the challenges of implementing the doctrine of R2P in cases where the state is unwilling to protect its citizens from human

rights abuses and political abuses, and subsequently points towards the inaction by the international community in conflicts such as Chad, Darfur, Myanmar and Zimbabwe. While Hammer demonstrates that he is a strong proponent of global accountability, he is also aware of the limits of the global governance machinery, especially with regard to ownership of global problems, exclusion of certain voices from the global public sphere, and imbalances that exist between donors and recipients in the global village. Hammer concludes that the trend has been set for promoting accountability at the global level, but challenges regional and international organisations to move beyond fragmented and ad hoc approaches to resolving peace and security problems. The author outlines a series of recommendations targeted at regional and global institutions to ensure that they incorporate public accountability in the delivery of their mandates.

As a whole, this book promotes understanding the transition of the African peace and security architecture and the opportunities for strengthening prevention, resolution and transformation of conflict. The common thread running through the broad range of topics is peace and security in the African continent. It is difficult, however, to identify an overall conclusion of the arguments presented in the 12 chapters. While candidness should be encouraged in analysing Africa's 21st century challenges, the book may be regarded as another example of 'Afro-pessimism' because of the manner in which it reiterates the ineffectiveness of the African peace and security architecture – as a result of the AU's limited capacity, the shortage of resources and the lack of political will. It should be added, however, that the book does share reasons for optimism, as for instance, the increasingly concerted role of regional organisations in institutionalising peace and security in their doctrines, normative frameworks and institutions. While the current developments in North Africa, West Africa and the Horn of Africa may point towards the ineffectiveness and inaction of the African Union, this does not prevent observations of a more robust peace and security architecture which is emerging in the continent.