

SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

MEMO TO THE NEW AU COMMISSION LEADERSHIP FROM THE ROARING GUNS ON AU'S FIRST DECADE OF SILENCING THE GUNS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most daring of a pledge that member states of the AU announced with the Solemn Declaration that was adopted during the 50th anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU) in May 2013 was that of ‘not to bequeath the burdens of conflict to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars by 2020’.¹ They further pledged, rather too ambitiously, ‘to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide.’ Subsequently, this pledge was encapsulated into one of AU’s agenda 2063’s flagship project, Silencing the Guns (STGs) in Africa.

More than the objective of ridding the continent of ‘wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide’ itself, what was most ambitious was the timeline they set to end all wars on the continent by 2020. It was no surprise when 2020 came and the AU at the 14th extraordinary of its Assembly held in December 2020 decided to extend the timeline by ten years.²

As the initiative marked ten years since its announcement in 2023, there is no indication that the AU is on a path of achieving progress toward having the

¹ AU (African Union), 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration (2013), page 5. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36205-doc-50th_anniversary_solemn_declaration_en.pdf

² AU (African Union), 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Silencing the Guns, 6 December 2020, Johannesburg, South Africa. Available at: <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/40819-doc-ext-assembly-au-dec-1-and-decl-1-xiv-e.pdf>

guns fall quiet. If anything, with the guns becoming louder than they were at any point in time during the past two decades, it is as if Africa went from the frying pan to the fire. It is true that some notable gains have been registered in terms of ending some conflicts³ and preventing a few others.⁴ This notwithstanding, there are more conflicts that have further deteriorated, expanded and newly erupted than those resolved or prevented. ‘Again and again’ seems to have taken the place of ‘never again’ to mass atrocities.

It is against this background that we have come to witness various calls for review or updating of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Not surprisingly, such a call has been made by none other than AU’s premier peace and security policy body, the Peace and Security Council (PSC),⁵ responsible for providing leadership in pursuit of AU’s STGs agenda. We affirm from the outset that the reversals that Africa experienced is not primarily to

³ From 2018 to 2020, the deployment of the African Union Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG) have resulted successful gains. Following the post-election crisis in the Gambia, the AUTSTG, a team comprised of technical experts, was assigned the duty of aiding the Gambian authorities in their reform efforts, all with the ultimate goal of achieving stability within the country. The work of the experts and its targeted approach resulted in the translation of AU norms in national instruments.

⁴ PSC field mission to Guinea Bissau was a preventive diplomacy that took place in anticipation of the political impasse linked to the Presidential election in 2019. The Council conducted the mission to urge the President to announce the date for Presidential elections before 23 June, 2019. On 18 June, 2019, President Vaz set the date of the presidential election for 24 November, 2019 (cite as source the PSC Handbook).

⁵ AUPSC (African Union Peace and Security Council), 1163rd Session of the PSC (21 July 2023), [\[PSC/MIN/COMM.1163 \(2023\)\]](#).

be blamed on neither the PSC Protocol nor on the the APSA. While the PSC Protocol and its APSA may not be perfect, stemming the tide of the roaring guns does not depend on perfecting them as further discussed below.

II. WHY THIS SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

When the STG was first announced, seven years to 2020, the conflict landscape on the continent was not in as bad a shape as it is today. At the end of the first ten years of STGs at the end of 2023, only six years are left to 2030, almost the same length of time when the AU pledged in 2013 to silence the guns by 2020. As the guns get much louder today than ten years ago, questions abound not only on AU's possession of the requisite strategy and means but also on whether it is acting with the urgency and decisiveness that the situation on the continent warrants.

While the inadequacy of the progress made is not on its own a problem, it is of paramount policy significance to have a clear picture of the extent of the setback that the AU's STGs agenda has faced in terms of Africa's peace and security outlook and the nature of this regression. Such clarity is critical to recalibrate the strategy and the approach to STGs and to mobilize the kind as well as nature of the response that the peace and security landscape on the continent warrants.

The first purpose of this memo is accordingly to elevate into the consciousness of policy makers the nature and gravity of the deterioration of the peace and security situation of the continent, with some deserving

to be treated as situations of utmost emergency. More and more people are suffering from the plethora of peace and security threats that are compounded by the economic and governance woes facing many countries on the continent. Correspondingly, this research memo to enable the incoming AU Commission leadership adopt measures for changing the current peace and security situation by undertaking a strategic review of the situation and AU's processes including the STGs and setting a new agenda for peace and security in Africa that has the prospect of success to achieve STGs.

As such, this research report seeks, in the context of the 20th anniversary of the official launch of the PSC, to offer a fairly detailed analysis of conflict trends on the continent during the first ten years of STGs. We plan to do this analysis through providing data on and examining the trend in the number of conflict/crisis situations by examining the conflict and crisis situations that featured on the agenda of the PSC. Considering that not all conflict/crisis situations make it to the agenda of the PSC, the report also attempts to provide a more comprehensive picture on the state of peace and security, based on data drawn from conflict datasets, including the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).⁶

The report examines the overall prevalence of conflicts and their types, including state-based, non-state and one-sided conflicts. In doing so, it presents valuable insights into the geographical spread and increase in the number of conflicts in the past 10 years. Furthermore, the research report

⁶ Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/>

will examine the situation of conflicts in the continent using data on fatalities, internally displaced persons and refugees as additional metrics. For this, the research report relied on the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) – Refugees Data Finder.⁷ In addition to such analyses, the research report also seeks to highlight whether the business-as-usual approach towards understanding the nature and dynamics of the prevailing threats to peace and security on the continent can deliver the objective of the STGs. It also explores what changes are necessary and how they should be implemented to ensure that the appreciation of the gravity of the situation and the nature and speed of the responses can be commensurate with the peace and security threats on the continent.

III. FROM THE PLEDGE NOT TO BEQUEATH CONFLICTS TO THE NEXT GENERATION TO STGS AS A FLAGSHIP PROJECT OF AGENDA 2063

The AU encapsulated the pledge of its member states during the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU not to bequeath conflicts to the next generation of Africans into one of the pillars of its Agenda 2063. The STGs thus constitute one of the flagship projects of the AU's Agenda 2063⁸

⁷ UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugee), <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=2bxU2f> and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>

⁸ AU (African Union), *Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want* (2015), https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework_document_book.pdf

,which is anchored on the Agenda's aspiration for a peaceful and secure Africa. In putting a premium on the aspiration for building a peaceful and secure Africa, Agenda 2063 is premised on the recognition that peace, security and stability constitute the foundation for pursuing the longstanding principal development and regional integration agenda of the continent.⁹

The STGs also complement and seek to translate into the realities of other AU initiatives that aim to promote peace and security, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) as well as the Common African Defense and Security Policy. Its four pillars are strengthening political governance, preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict reconstruction and development, provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting sustainable peace and security.

3.1. Milestones of the Silencing the Guns Initiative

Despite the initial goal of achieving the STGs by 2020, the initiative was not accompanied by any implementation plan for three years after it was initiated. However, in November 2016, the PSC¹⁰ adopted the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the

⁹ *The Constitutive Act of the AU and the Protocol Establishing the PSC.*

¹⁰ AU (African Union), *AU Retreat to Elaborate a Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 Concludes in Lusaka, Zambia*, (2016) <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/au-retreat-to-elaborate-a-roadmap-on-practical-steps-to-silence-the-guns-in-africa-by-2020-concludes-in-lusaka-zambia>

Guns (the Lusaka Master Roadmap)¹¹ during its retreat in Lusaka, Zambia. Following the PSC's submission, the roadmap was subsequently adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of States in January 2017 during the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly.¹² Furthermore, at the 29th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, it was declared¹³ that September of each year, until 2020, would be designated as 'Africa Amnesty Month'. The primary objective of the Amnesty Month is to encourage the surrender of weapons/arms in possession of the civilian population and others illegally possessing such weapons and arms as part of the effort to limit the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, which constitute major contributing factor to the surge in conflicts.

It is against this backdrop that the AU took the initiative to dedicate the theme of 2020 to 'Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development'. In the same year, the AU also convened the 14th Extraordinary Session on STGs. Cognizance of the lack of progress towards meeting the initial timeline of 2020 and the necessity for

continuing the pursuit of the agenda of the STGs, the extraordinary session of the AU Assembly of December 2020¹⁴ decided to not only extend the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap for ten years (from 2021 to 2030) but to also have periodic reviews every two years. The AU Assembly further extended the commemoration and implementation of the Africa Amnesty Month until 2030.

In a bid to achieve the STGs initiative and in line with the recommendation given during the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of States, the 'Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030' was adopted in June 2021. Furthermore, the implementation plan for the monitoring and evaluation mechanism was also finalized in June 2022 during a meeting that was attended by the relevant departments of the African Union Commission (AUC), RECs/RMs, relevant AU Organs and those partners that support the STGs initiative.

Another key milestone for the STG was the establishment of the STGs Unit by the AUC. This Unit is responsible for synchronizing the activities of the AUC and the PSC and undertaking activities to achieve the goals of the Initiative. In this respect, the Chairperson has the autonomy to appoint a High Representative for the STGs pursuant to the AU's objective to end all conflicts, **gender-based** violence, terrorism, and

¹¹ AU (African Union), *African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa by Year 2020 (Lusaka Master Roadmap 2016)* https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/37996-doc-au_roadmap_silencing_guns_2020.pdf

¹² AU (African Union), *The Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 -31 January 2017, Assembly/AU/Dec.630(XXVIII)*. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/32520-sc19553_e_original_-_assembly_decisions_621-641_-_xxviii.pdf

¹³ AU (African Union), *The Twenty-Nine Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 3-4 July 2017*. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/37294-assembly_a_u_dec_642_-_664_xxix_e_1.pdf

¹⁴ AU (African Union), *Decision adopted online through a silent procedure: on the organization of the 13th and 14th extraordinary sessions of the Assembly on AfCFTA and Silencing the Guns (November 2020)*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/39665-sc38026-e_decision_adopated_online_on_13th_and_14th_extr_assembly_sessions.pdf

prevent genocide in the Continent by 2030. Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra served as the high representative of the Chairperson from January 2018 to December 2022. In January 2023, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas was appointed as the new AU High Representative for STGs and assumed responsibility in subsequent months.

Within the framework of the foregoing, the AU deployed peace-making and mediation processes that sought to contribute to the STGs agenda. The AU's past interventions vary depending on the complexity and dynamics of the conflict.

3.1.1. Conflict Prevention

The PSC Protocol tasks the PSC with the responsibilities of conflict prevention¹⁵ and initiating early responses.¹⁶ The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), established in 2006, is one of the key mechanisms used to meet this mandate. It comprises a central monitoring hub, the 'Situation Room', and regional observation units. To streamline CEWS operations, the AU has partnered with regional mechanisms.

An example of this system in action was when President Nkurunziza announced his intention to propose a constitutional amendment allowing for a third term on 21 March 2014. The CEWS was able to quickly gather relevant information about the ensuing crisis in Burundi. This timely information was crucial as it enabled an immediate response from the PSC and the involvement of the AU special representative for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Diarra. This is a clear

example of the effectiveness of the CEWS when accompanied by other preventive mechanisms.

The PSC is entrusted with the responsibility of engaging in preventive diplomacy through collective intervention and through its Chairperson. The role of preventive diplomacy is also given to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Panel of the Wise, and in collaboration with a regional mechanism.

The Panel of the Wise which is composed of 'five highly respected African personalities' from each of the five regions are engaged with thematic reflections and undertaking preventive missions. In recent years, it has been observed that there is an increased deployment of the Panel of the Wise pre and post-elections that has proven to be effective.¹⁷ For example, the Panel carried out election observation and preventive diplomacy missions in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, the Liberian presidential election, and the DRC.¹⁸ In terms of mediation efforts, the Panel also supported the Ethiopia talks that led to the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in November 2022 (Pretoria Agreement) through a member of the Panel becoming a member of the AU High-Level Panel, chaired by the AU High Representative for the Horn of

¹⁷ Amani Africa, 'The African Union Peace and Security Council at 20: From a Promising Past to a Challenged Present to a Less Certain Future' (2024). Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-at-20-from-a-promising-past-and-a-challenged-present-to-a-less-certain-future/>

¹⁸ Amani Africa, 'Briefing by the Panel of the Wise, FemWise and Wise Youth on their activities in Africa' (12 March 2024). Available at: <https://papsrepository.africa-union.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/18333/1142%20Briefing%20Note%20-%20EN.pdf?sequence=8&isAllowed=y>

¹⁵ AU (African Union), 'Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU', Article 2(1) (Protocol of the AUPSC) (2002)

¹⁶ Protocol of the AUPSC Article 3(b)

Africa, which facilitated the Pretoria talks.¹⁹ Currently, the Panel is requested by the PSC to support political transitions in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Guinea.

3.1.2. Conflict management and resolution

During the past two decades, the AU has initiated multiple peace-making and mediation processes, both independently and in collaboration with regional mechanisms or the UN. These efforts have spanned a wide range of crisis situations, with the PSC addressing issues in regions including but not limited to Sudan-South Sudan, CAR, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Libya, Egypt, the DRC, South Sudan and Sudan.

These mediation and peace-making initiatives have taken various formats, including ad hoc committees of Heads of State and Government (as seen in the cases of Libya and South Sudan), high-level panels (such as those for Ethiopia, Egypt and South Sudan-Sudan and Sudan, including the recently established High-Level Panel), and the appointment of chief mediators or special representatives or envoys of the Chairperson of the AU Commission along with special political offices (as in the case of CAR, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan).

The AU Commission Chairperson has established ad hoc committees, high-level panels, chief mediators and special representatives to bolster various peace efforts since the launch of the STGs

¹⁹ AUPSC (African Union Peace and Security Council), 'Briefing note: the role of the African Union Panel of the Wise in the promotion of peace security and stability in Africa' (3 March 2023). Available at: <https://amaniAfrica-et.org/briefing-by-the-panel-of-the-wise-femwise-and-wiseyouth-on-their-activities-in-africa/>

initiative. In 2015, an ad-hoc committee of five Heads of State and Government was established specifically for South Sudan. This group was designed to support the IGAD-led mediation efforts and assist the nation in its pursuit of re-establishing peace. In 2013, following the military overthrow of democratically-elected President Mohamed Morsi, the AU applied the format of a high-level panel in Egypt. In 2022, a similar panel was assembled to facilitate the peace process in Ethiopia. This panel's work culminated in the signing of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) on November 2, 2022, ending two-year conflict in the country's north. Moreover, the AUC Chairperson formed the most recent high-level panel for Sudan in January 2024.

One of the challenges impacting the PSC's role in mediation and peace-making efforts could be attributed to the absence of a well-defined framework for devising and executing interventions tailored to specific conflict situations and their corresponding levels of severity. Some of the past failures are attributed to the lack of well-thought-out peace-making strategy tailored to each conflict situation and the reactive approach of AU's mediation and peace-making endeavours. Additionally, given several months wasted before the establishment of the High-Level Panel for Sudan and the momentum the AU lost in playing its part peace-making in Sudan following the outbreak of the war in April 2023, it is critical to address insufficient coordination among AU actors.

Besides the peace-making and mediation efforts, due to the spike in conflicts over the past two decades, the AU has

mandated, authorised or endorsed various peace support operations. Since its establishment the AU has actively been engaged in the crises of various countries, with 22 peace support operations mandated and authorised by the AU. Of these, 13 were deployed following the launch of the 'STGs' initiative, while two began before the initiative was launched but have continued their operations after the launch of the STG (see figure 1).

In the same year (2013) that the 'STGs' initiative was launched, the AU deployed the African-Led International Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR), which later transitioned to the AU mission for CAR and Central Africa (MISCA). MISCA, besides promoting political dialogue and reconciliation, assumed an additional role in supporting the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) process. Similarly, the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), previously known as the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), has been pivotal in establishing federal and state-level governance and security structures in Somalia since its inauguration in 2007. Despite the continuous threats from Al-Shabaab, the mission's troops have made remarkable contributions and sacrifices, greatly contributing to relative peace in Somalia.

In terms of AU-authorized missions, notable contributions have been made towards the implementation of the STGs agenda. This includes the work of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin (MNJTF). Even though these forces are not able to eliminate insurgents in the region, MNJTF contributed to reducing threats from insurgents and terrorist groups. A prime example of a mission that contributed

to containing instability in post-election conflict was in 2017, when The Gambia experienced a political shift following Adama Barrow's victory and the refusal of Yahya Jammeh to transfer power. During this transition, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Stabilization Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) played a crucial role in ensuring peaceful transition and maintaining the country's fragile democracy.²⁰

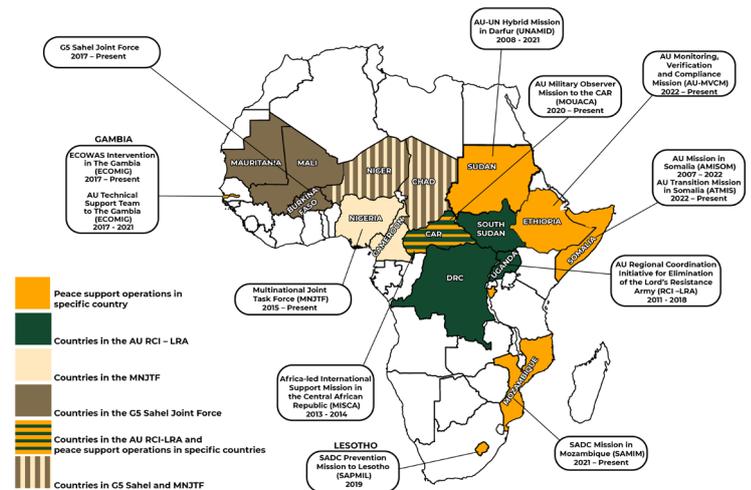


Figure 1: AU mandated and endorsed Peace Support Operations since 2013

These peacekeeping operations seen above have proven to be effective in managing armed conflicts within the continent and minimizing humanitarian crises, highlighting the significant role regional actors can play in maintaining international security. The operations have also promoted better coordination among African security forces, as seen in AU-authorized regional missions.

²⁰ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 'The role of regional forced in The Gambia and what their Presence will mean in 2021 elections' (2020). Available at: https://pscc.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/publications/PSCC_Policy_Paper_-_The_role_of_the_regional_forces_in_Gambia_and_what_their_presence_will_mean_in_2021_elections.pdf

3.1.3. Promotion of democracy and good governance

Since the adoption of the STGs initiative, the AU through the PSC has made efforts to the enforcement of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the *Lomé Declaration* on unconstitutional changes of government of 2000. Amongst these efforts are the PSC's 2014 decision to hold quarterly briefings on national elections²¹ and regularizing of deploying election observer missions before and after elections.

In an effort to strengthen the synergy between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), the PSC decided in 2022 to institutionalize and make the joint engagement between the PSC and AGA Platform an annual event.

With regards to the implementation of AU's Unconstitutional Changes of Government regime, provided under Article 4(p) of the AU Constitutive Act and Article 7(g) of the PSC Protocol Since its establishment, the AU has so far imposed suspension 21 times due to unconstitutional changes of government since the AU became operational. Of these 11 the suspensions were since 2013, highlighting how the situation deteriorated during the first ten years of the STGs.

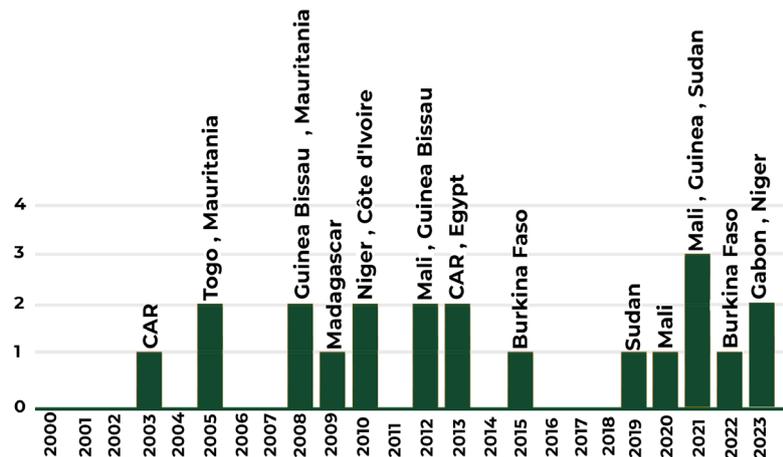


Figure 2: Data on suspension of states from the AU for UCG before and after 2013

In response to the recent wave of coups, the PSC has sanctioned Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Sudan. However, the PSC failed to enforce its rules on Chad, where the military seized power following the death of the former President by suspending the constitution and dissolving the government. PSC's failure to act against the military seizure of power in Chad had brought a major blow to its credibility. Compared to earlier years, in the recent cases of military coups, the AU did not act on PSC decisions that envisaged the establishment of mechanisms that catalyse and support reform processes in countries in [transition](#).

3.1.4. Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

The PSC mandate for PCRDR emanates from the Constitutive Act, which includes PCRDR among the strategies for promoting and safeguarding peace and security across the continent. But mainly, the PSC's PCRDR mandate is articulated in several sections of the PSC Protocol, such as Articles 3(c), 7(1b), and 14. Specifically, Article 14 states that in post-conflict situations, the PSC is responsible for supporting the restoration of the

²¹ AUPSC (African Union Peace and Security Council), Press Statement [[PSC/PR/BR.1\(CDXXIV\)](#)] (12 March 2014)

rule of law, establishing and developing democratic institutions, and overseeing the preparation, organization, and supervision of elections in the Member States concerned. Additionally, the AU's Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020 (Lusaka Master Roadmap 2016) outlines specific measures, including the enhancement of institutional capacities for PCRD, as well as efforts in stabilization, peacebuilding, and reconstruction. Accordingly, since the launch of the STGs, the AU has revised the AU PCRD Policy Framework with the view to align the policy with the evolving continental security dynamics and ensure its effectiveness in achieving its intended purpose. The AU have also formulated a Transitional Justice Policy in February 2019 to assist Member States in achieving a thorough transitional justice process. To coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the PCRD Policy, an Inter-Departmental Task Force on PCRD was formed within the Commission in 2016. In order to enhance the operationalization of the PCRD Policy, the AU established a PCRD Centre in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2021.

The AU used to rely solely on liaison offices to support PCRD efforts in member states. However, in recent years, it has explored other methods, like support missions. The AU Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG), deployed to Gambia in 2018, is an example of this. Despite these efforts, the continent's evolving security landscape, recurring conflicts, funding challenges, and coordination gaps have posed a challenge when it comes to the implementation of the PCRD policy. These challenges are expected to be resolved with the revised policy. The revised PCRD policy adopted in February 2024. This it seeks to ensure through creating links

across the peace process cycle and expand PCRD measures beyond the security and institutional realms by include the development dimension.

IV. YEARS OF THE ROARING GUNS: HOW CONFLICTS AND CRISES HAVE INCREASED DURING THE FIRST TEN-YEAR OF THE STGS

Yet, the various efforts of the AU for conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building proved to be no match to what the peace and security situation on the continent requires. The number and scale of conflicts have outpaced the pace and strength of AU's responses for STGs.

This part is meant to provide data and analysis on conflict trends in Africa during the first ten year of the STGs. In order to provide a more comprehensive picture in this respect, the data and analysis in this part draw on three sources. The first of these sources focus on the data from situations that featured on the agenda of the PSC during the first ten-year of the STGs. However, since the data from the PSC does not reflect the full picture of conflict events and dynamics on the continent, we use as the second source of data various conflict datasets that are widely used in the policy and research worlds. To complement and further reinforce the nature of these changes in numbers, geographic spread and level of intensity of conflicts and crises, this section also draws on data on the humanitarian impacts of conflict trends during the first ten-year of the STGs.

4.1. Exponential growth in the number of crisis/conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC

At the time of the proclamation of the commitment to silencing the guns in May 2013, the state of peace and security in Africa was already precarious, with just over a dozen crisis and conflict situations on the PSC's agenda. This number has since increased dramatically.

In the East/Horn of Africa, the situations on the agenda of the PSC as of May 2013 were, Sudan (Darfur), Sudan/South Sudan, Abiye, and Somalia. Another situation in this region, as per the five geographic regions of the AU, is the crisis in Madagascar, which was on the agenda of the PSC since 2009 but dropped off during the early years of the STGs following the restoration of constitutional order.

In the Central Africa region, situations on the agenda of the PSC included the Eastern DRC conflict including the armed conflict involving the armed rebel group March 23 (M23), the conflict in the CAR and the conflict involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the region. The conflict in Libya and the crisis associated with the political transition in Tunisia were on the agenda of the PSC from North Africa. Situations on the agenda of the PSC from West Africa were the conflict in Mali and the politico-constitutional crisis in Guinea Bissau.

In the months following May 2013, several situations were added to the list of situations on the PSC agenda. In July 2013, the PSC became seized with the politico-constitutional crisis in Egypt following the overthrow of the democratically elected

government of Mohamed Morsi. In December, following the outbreak of the civil war, South Sudan's internal conflict was added to the agenda of the PSC.

As of May 2013, despite starting to infiltrate into neighbouring countries and emerging to be a major regional threat, the PSC did not get actively seized with the conflict involving Boko Haram as a standalone conflict. It was only in the following year after the abduction of Chibok school girls and as Boko Haram grew to establish presence and orchestrate attacks in the neighbouring countries of Cameroon, Chad and Niger that the situation involving Boko Haram was added to the list of the agenda of the PSC on its own rather than just as part of the thematic agenda of the PSC on terrorism as was the case until then. Similarly, the conflict in Mali was almost exclusively confined to Mali, despite linkages of the armed groups with regional terrorist groups and movement of arms and armed groups from Libya. It is only in the subsequent years that the situation morphed into a wider regional conflict as neighbouring countries including Niger and Burkina Faso have become like Mali active theatre of conflicts involving terrorist groups. So, the PSC expanded its engagement by adding the situation in these other central Sahelian states under the rubric of the situation in the Sahel or the situation in Mali and the Sahel.

Additionally, until the situations in Lesotho and Mozambique arose several years later, the PSC was not seized actively with any situation in the Southern Africa region. This is despite the transition in Zimbabwe being highlighted in the PSC Report to the AU Assembly on the state of Peace and Security in Africa as an issue AU was tracking without it being actively

on the agenda of the PSC.

The number of situations that the PSC is seized with has grown exponentially during the second half of the first ten years of the STGs. Accordingly, more than half of the crisis/conflict situations that featured on the agenda of the PSC were in the last five –to-seven years.

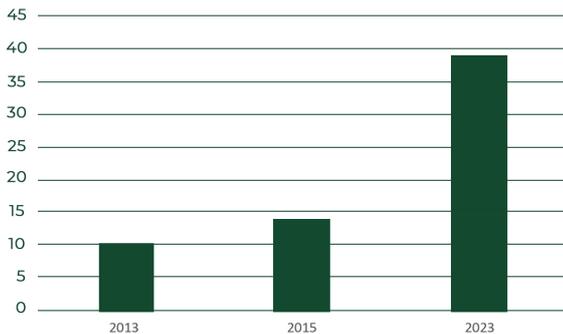


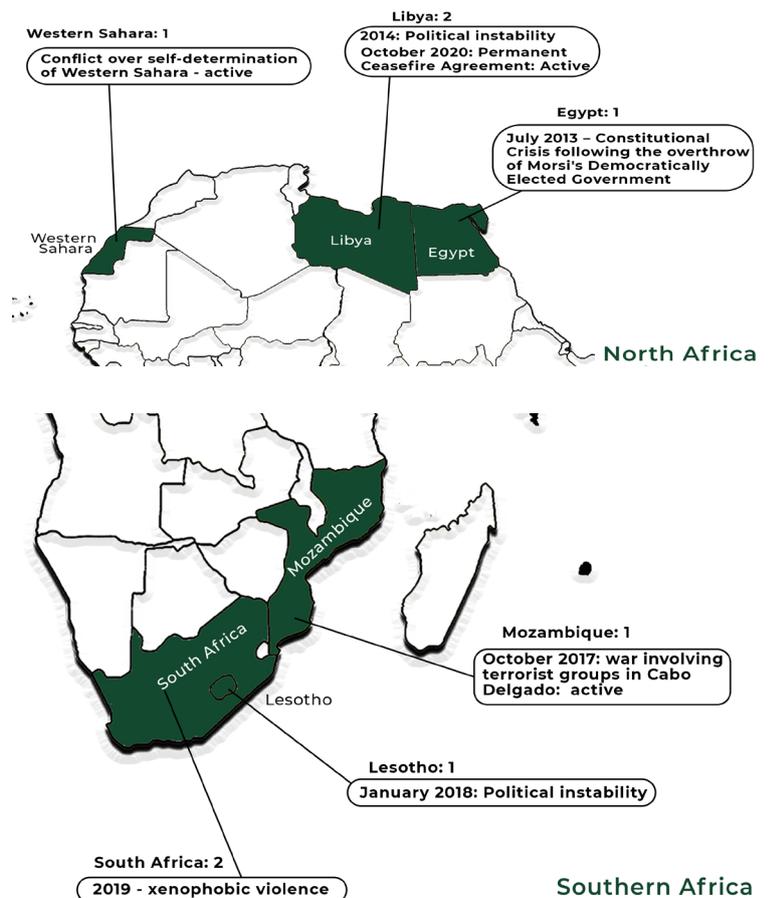
Figure 3: No. of conflict situations on the agenda of the AU PSC Source: Own data collected from AU PSC activities

If one examines the data in terms of crisis/conflict situations that the PSC dealt with in one calendar year from 2013, the increase in the number of conflict situations on the PSC agenda is evident. This trend reflects the growing number of conflicts in Africa. In 2013, the Agenda of the PSC included 10 situations, involving 10 countries. By 2015, this number had risen to 14, as the situation on the continent continued to deteriorate further. Accordingly, the conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC have increased to 43 between 2013 and 2023. Out of the 43, as of the end of 2023 the PSC is actively seized with 23, involving 17 countries. This indicates both the spread of conflicts/crises and the rise in the number of such conflicts/crises within individual countries.

The data further shows that the number of conflicts have increased during the first ten year of the STG by more than two folds. As depicted in the above graph, the

number of conflict and crisis situations added to the agenda of the PSC since May 2013 stood at 43.

Some countries have remained on the Agenda of the PSC since 2013, while others have been added over the years. For instance, the Abyei Area, Libya, DRC and CAR have been on the agenda as of May 2013, and have remained there in subsequent years. Others such as Burkina Faso that was on the agenda of the PSC in 2014/2015 following military seizure of power in November 2014 and the attempted overthrow of the civilian transitional government in September 2015 came back to the agenda of the PSC on account of the emergence in the country of conflicts involving terrorist groups and the military coups in 2022.



during the first part of the first ten years of the STGs, this increase in the number of conflicts on the agenda of the PSC involving terrorist groups is attributable to the expansion of such conflicts and their subsequent prominence in the Sahel and the eruption of such conflict in Southern Africa in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique.

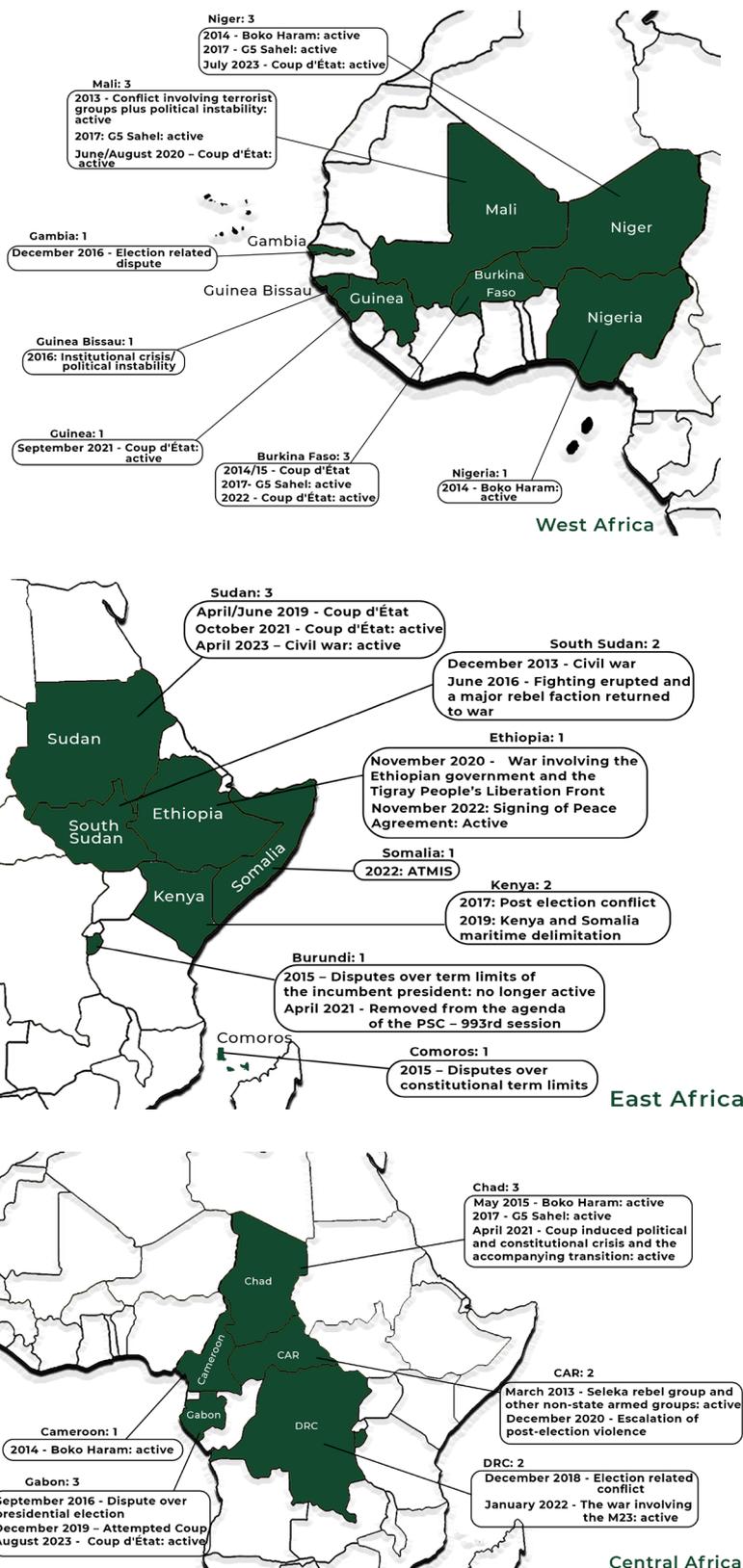


Figure 4: Countries added to the agenda of the PSC since 2013

This exponential increase in the number of crisis/conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC can be attributed to three factors. The first of these is the growth in conflicts involving terrorist groups. Apart from the emergence of Lake Chad Basin as a main threat of conflicts involving terrorism

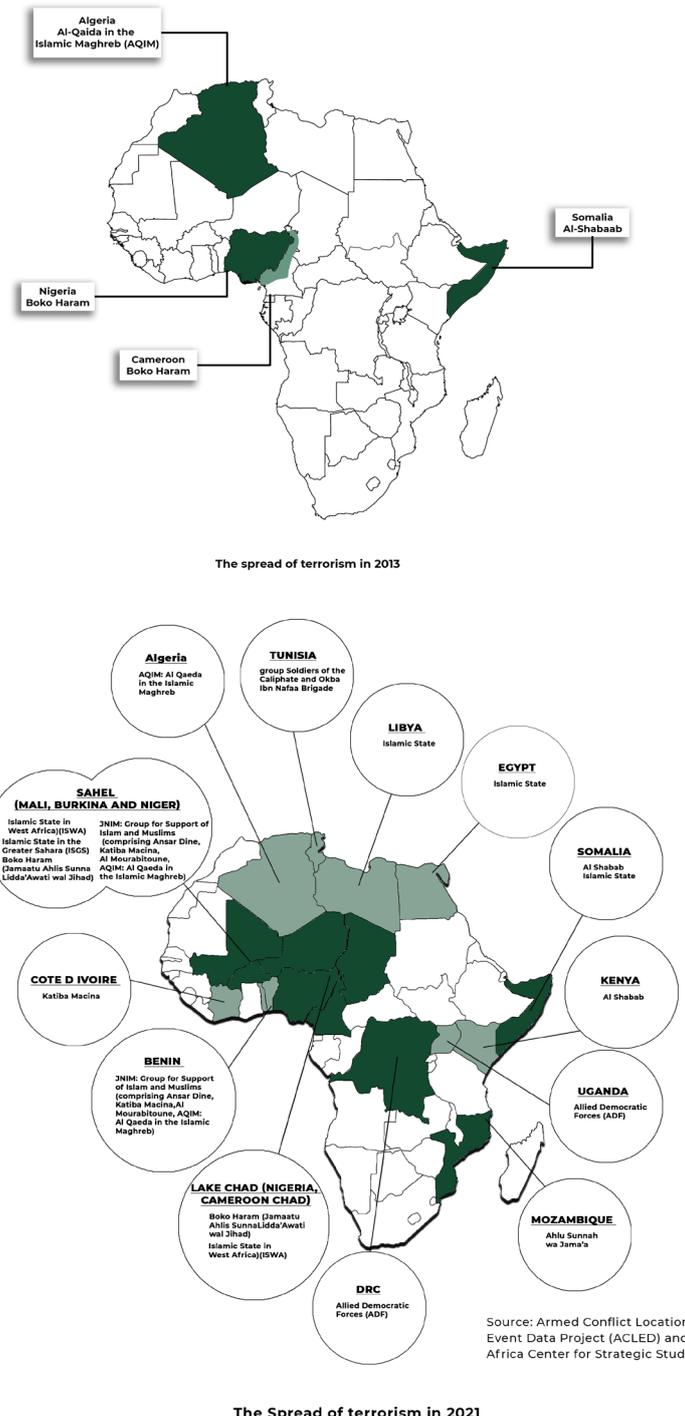


Figure 5: Comparison of the spread of terrorism in 2013 and 2021

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and Africa Center for Strategic Studies

The persistence of conflicts involving terrorist groups in parts of Africa, notably the Sahel, which has eclipsed the Lake Chad Basin as the epicentre of such conflicts in Africa and even globally, remains a critical concern. According to the 2023 Global Terrorism Index, four of the ten countries most affected by conflicts involving terrorist groups are located in the Sahel, with this region witnessing more terrorism-related deaths in 2022 than South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa combined. Not surprisingly, West Africa emerges as the hardest-hit region, representing 48% and 52% of total attacks and fatalities, respectively. Additionally, East Africa, including countries like Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda, as well as Central Africa, encompassing Cameroon, the CAR, Chad, and the DRC, face significant violence from terrorist attacks.

The second factor for the rise in the number of crisis/conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC relates to the resurgence of military coups, particularly since 2020. Apart from those unconstitutional changes PSC seized with in 2013 (Egypt), and 2014 and 2015 (Burkina Faso), for the first time since the turn of the century, Africa witnessed four coups in a period of less than one year in 2021. In 2023, two successful coups occurred, surpassing the number from the previous year. For the first time in its history, the AU suspended two of its member countries, Niger and Gabon, within a single month, August 2023. Since August 2020, there have been nine successful military takeovers, and remarkably, six of these occurred in countries within West Africa. Among the 14 countries that constitute the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), four are currently subjected to military rule, which accounts for nearly a third of all ECOWAS

nations. The recent surge in coups has led to a swath of nations under military rule across the Sahel, stretching from the Atlantic coast in Guinea through central Sahel to Sudan's Red Sea coast. This situation, unseen on the continent since the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to its successor, the AU, in 2000, is causing growing concern.²²

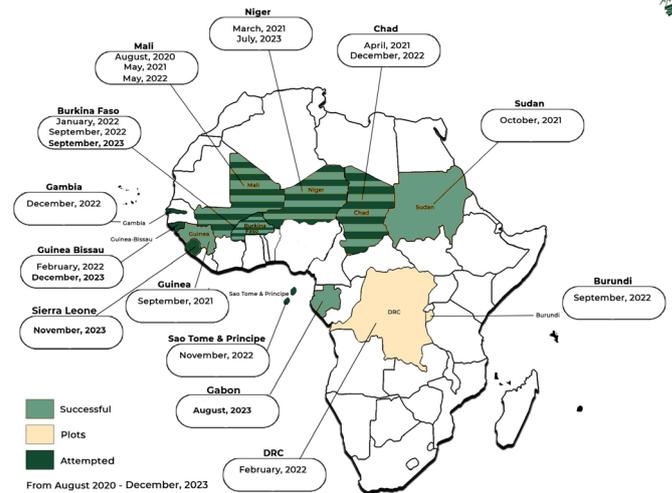


Figure 6: Attempted, successful and plots coups in Africa (2020 - 2023)

The third factor has to do with the eruption of new armed conflicts and those other crises involving political instability and incidents of violence that triggered the involvement of the PSC. Apart from the civil war in South Sudan that erupted in December 2013, other newly erupted conflicts involve the civil war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia (Nov 2020 on PSC agenda since October 2021), Eastern DRC (the re-emergence of the M23 rebellion and the ensuing fighting in Eastern DRC in April 2022, on PSC agenda since August 2022) and the recent one involving the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan since April 2023. Falling in this category are also the

²² Amani Africa, *The Peace and Security Council in 2023: The Year in Review (2023)*. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Peace-and-Security-Council-in-2023-The-Year-in-Review.pdf>

political crisis in Guinea Bissau, Lesotho and Madagascar, incidents of violence notably xenophobic attacks in South Africa and crises induced by disputes over elections and term limits in Burundi, CAR, DRC, Gabon and The Gambia.

In terms of inter-state conflicts or tensions, those that made it to the agenda of the PSC involve the situations between Sudan and South Sudan and the maritime boundary dispute between Kenya and Somalia.

4.2. Conflict trends as captured in global conflict datasets (2013 - 2023)

Since the birth of the STGs initiative, the continent has witnessed various conflicts in all its five regions. The conflicts in Burkina Faso, the CAR, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Western Sahara, which featured on the agenda of the PSC, being the most apparent.

However, not all conflict or crisis situations are featured on the agenda of the PSC. The various conflict datasets show that the conflict picture of the continent during the past ten years of the implementation of the STGs is worse than what is inferred from the situations on the agenda of the PSC. The full conflict picture of the continent covers political crises that led to major incidents of violence with fatalities and armed confrontations involving insurgent, militia or other armed groups which did not make it to the agenda of the PSC. The data on this fuller picture of the conflict and crisis situations on the continent highlight that more countries and people are affected by conflicts/crises than in those situations that made it to the PSC agenda.

While most of the conflicts are armed groups fighting against government forces or other armed groups within the country, there have also been some conflicts where foreign powers and/or neighbouring states have intervened.

It emerges from the various conflict datasets that there is a drastic increase in the number of conflict events during the first ten-year period of the STGs. In particular, the total number of conflict events in different countries from 2013 to 2023 has shown a constant increase (see figure 7). The data suggests that there is a significant upward trend from 2019 onwards, indicating increased instability during the second half of the first ten-year period of the STGs. Observing the annual totals, there is a noticeable upward trend in the number of conflict events from 2013 (1671) to a peak in 2022 (4555), followed by a slight decrease in 2023 (4230).

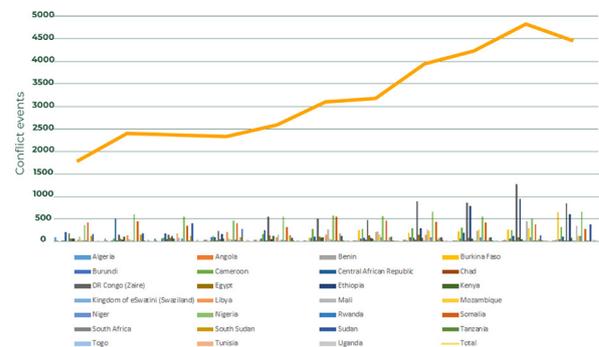


Figure 7: Number of conflicts (2013 - 2023) . Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024)²³

From 2013 to 2023, the number of conflict events in Africa increased significantly by 153.13%. Ironically, the most substantial year-over-year increase occurred in 2020 (the year when African leaders aspired to

²³ **Note:** *This figure excludes conflict events that resulted from internationalized conflicts due to incompatibility of UCDP dataset. ** Figure only includes conflict events resulted from state-based conflict, non-state conflict and one-sided violence events

bring wars to an end), with a 24.34% rise, indicating a major escalation in conflict events during that year. The only decreases were observed in 2015 (-2.32%), 2016 (-1.17%), and 2023 (-7.13%). These decreases suggest short-term improvements or possible resolution efforts, though they were followed by subsequent increases. Notably, 2021 and 2022 saw significant increases, indicating a resurgence or intensification of conflicts in those years. The overall trend points to a persistent rise in conflict occurrences during the decade. Over this decade of upheaval, the compound annual growth rate of conflicts in Africa stands at a staggering 9.6%.²⁴

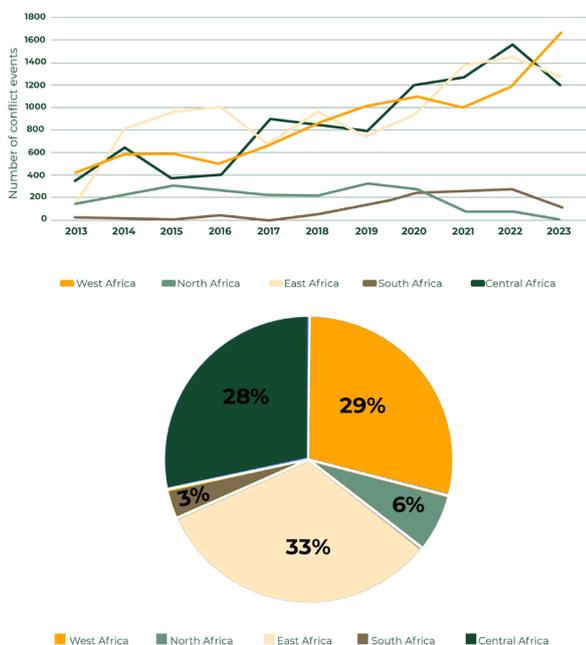


Figure 8: Number of conflict events across regions (2013 - 2023) and a chart showing regional variations of the number of conflict events from 2013 - 2023. Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024)²⁵

When looking at the conflict situation in the five regions of the continent, the various regions reflect unique and persistent challenges contributing to the overall conflict landscape in Africa. From the five regions of Africa **West Africa** and **East Africa** bear the most conflict burden, with significant and continuous increases in conflict events (see figure 8). The consistent increase in conflict events in these regions suggests underlying issues such as the democratic governance deficit, fast spreading terrorism threats and violent extremism, increase economic challenges affecting ordinary people in a context of elite corruption and the growing gap and the resultant breakdown of the social contract between the state and society. Western Africa stands out for its high conflict numbers, with Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso bearing much of the conflict burden in the region. The region observed significant spikes in 2019 (1010 events), 2022 (1199 events), and 2023 (1668). Eastern Africa also faces significant turmoil, with Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia bearing much of the conflict burden in the region. The region experiences a major surge in conflict events starting from 2014 (813 events) reaching its peak in 2022 (1447 events).

Central Africa experiences considerable conflict as well. While much of this conflict burden in this region is borne by the DRC and the CAR, other countries such as Cameroon and Chad did not escape the brunt of conflicts either. A notable increase in conflict events from 2020 onwards, indicates escalating conflicts in recent years. The Southern Africa region on the other hand remains relatively low in conflict events with occasional spikes, notably in 2019 (133 events) and 2020 (233 events), mainly due to the situation in the Northern region of Mozambique,

²⁴ CAGR= (Beginning Value/Ending Value) n¹-1

²⁵ **Note:** *This figure excludes conflict events that resulted from internationalized conflicts due to incompatibility of UCDP dataset. ** Figure only includes conflict events resulted from state-based conflict, non-state conflict and one-sided violence events.

Cabo Delgado. The overall low numbers of conflict events suggest relative stability compared to other regions. Lastly, Northern Africa, while showing fluctuating levels of conflict, has substantial numbers of incidents in countries such as Libya and to a lesser extent Egypt. A dramatic decrease in conflict events from 2020 (277 events) to 2023 (7 events), suggesting substantial stabilization that is linked with the conflict in Libya.

To better illustrate the increase in conflict events, a regional comparison of data from 2013 to 2023 provides a clearer picture (see Figure 9). For example, Central Africa has experienced a more than threefold increase in conflict events between 2013 and 2023, driven by ongoing instability in the DRC and CAR, along with escalating violence from armed groups and the spread of Boko Haram into Cameroon and Chad as well as the outbreak of civil war in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This rise likely reflects the prolonged and entrenched nature of these crises, as well as the spread of violence to previously unaffected areas and the emergence of new ones, particularly in Anglophone Cameroon. Similarly, West Africa has seen a nearly fourfold increase in conflict events, with a staggering 295% rise over the decade. In East Africa, conflict events have increased by over 70% between 2013 and 2023.

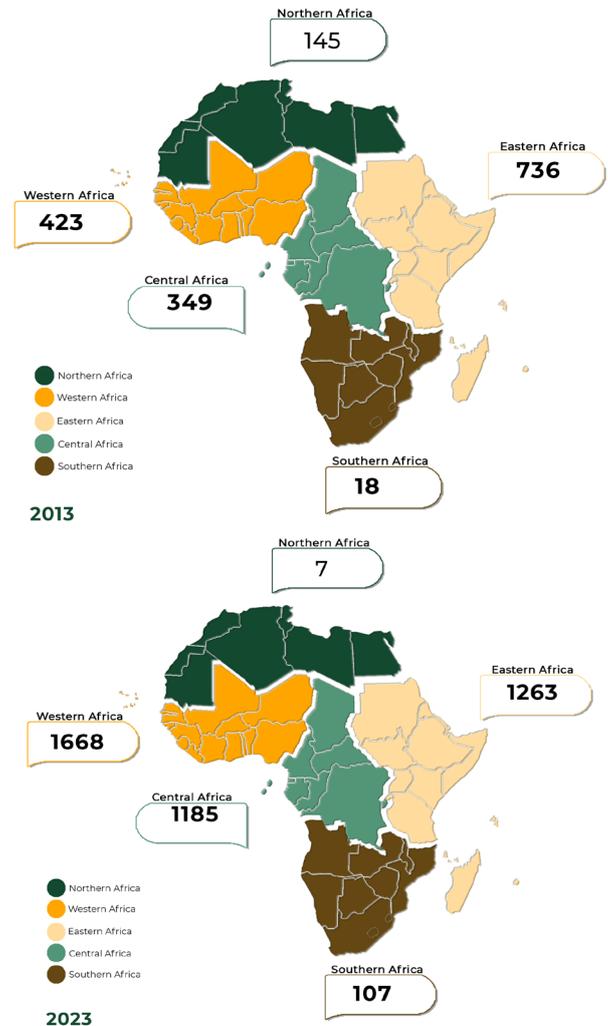


Figure 9: Regional comparison of conflict events between 2013 - 2023 Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024)

In contrast to these regions, Southern Africa, while having smaller absolute numbers, has witnessed a significant increase in conflict events, with more than a fivefold rise (from 18 to 107 events). On the other hand, North Africa presents a stark contrast, showing a dramatic decrease in conflict events, plummeting from 145 to just 7 by the end of the ten-year period.

This comparison indicates that most regions, except North Africa, have experienced a significant increase in conflict events, pointing to a general deterioration in the peace and security across much of Africa over the past

decade. The sharp contrast between the increases in West, East, and Central Africa and the decrease in North Africa underscores the resolution of the tension between stability and democratization in the context of the so called Arab springs in favor of stability in almost all countries of North Africa affected by the Arab spring.

With regards to specific countries, the top conflict-prone countries during the ten-year period are the DRC, Nigeria, and Somalia. These three countries collectively account for a significant portion of the total conflicts in Africa, highlighting persistent and severe issues within these countries. These three countries take a 46% share of the conflict events that took place from 2013 – 2023.

The DRC has the highest number of conflicts, with a staggering total of 5683 conflict events consistently reporting high numbers each year. The DRC has faced continuous conflict, political turmoil, and severe humanitarian crises. Despite various peace agreements and international interventions, violence persists in the eastern regions of the country, driven by numerous armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and the M23. These groups have committed widespread atrocities, including massacres, sexual violence, and child soldier recruitment.

Efforts by the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and the United Nations peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) to control the violence have been largely ineffective. The conflict's complexity is heightened by regional actors' involvement and competition over natural resources, further fueling the

insurgencies. Attempts to demobilize and reintegrate combatants have had limited success, leaving many areas outside central government control. Recently, the South African Development Community (SADC) have also deployed the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) to manage the worsening security situation.

Following the DRC, Nigeria has the second-highest number of conflict events, totalling 5593. One of the key contributors to Nigeria's high conflict numbers are the activities of non-state armed groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), as well as communal militias. Notably, in 2013, Boko Haram expanded its operations to neighbouring countries - Cameroon, Chad and Niger- becoming a regional threat to the Lake Chad region.²⁶ In subsequent years, Boko Haram gained global notoriety as the world's deadliest terrorist group and it was split into two factions: Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). In response, the Nigerian government, recognizing the need for regional cooperation, helped formed the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) under the African Union Peace and Security framework to address Boko Haram's cross-border activities. Although the MNJTF has managed to reduce the capacity of the Islamic militant groups, attacks have persisted with the two main Boko Haram splinter, JAS and ISWAP continually clashing to gain more control. ACLED data indicates that in 2021, organized political violence involving militia

26 ACLED, 'A decade After Chibok: Assessing Nigeria's Regional Response to Boko Haram' (2024), Available at: <https://acleddata.com/2024/04/16/a-decade-after-chibok-assessing-nigerias-regional-response-to-boko-haram/>

groups in Nigeria increased by 50%.²⁷

Somalia ranks third, with 4073 conflict events from 2013 - 2023. The conflicts in Somalia have persisted for over two decades, predating the launch of the STGs. This prolonged instability highlights the deep-rooted challenges that have continued to affect the country despite regional and international efforts for peace and security in the country. Somalia has been faced with ongoing violence primarily due to the militant group Al-Shabaab, which has waged an insurgency against the Somali government and its international allies since 2006. Al-Shabaab has carried out numerous bombings, assassinations, and attacks on both civilian and military targets. Their ability to adapt and maintain operations has significantly hindered peace and security in the region. Politically, Somalia has seen frequent leadership changes, delayed elections, and disputes between the federal government and regional states, undermining efforts to establish stable governance. The prolonged conflict has worsened the humanitarian crisis, with millions displaced, facing food insecurity, malnutrition, and lack of access to basic services. This situation has been further aggravated by natural disasters such as droughts and floods, disrupting livelihoods and displacing communities. The AU supported by the UN and international partners, particularly through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its successor, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), has been instrumental in aiding the Somali government in its fight against Al-Shabaab and efforts to stabilize the nation. Although the mission is coming

to an end and was faced by financial and operational challenges that restricted it from achieving its full objectives, it has played leading role in creating the relative stability in Somalia and various lessons can be taken from this mission for future operations.

By contrast, the conflict situations that attracted the most attention and diplomatic resources of the PSC that also fall in the category of countries with heavy conflict burden are Sudan and South Sudan. Although the number of incidents of conflict events is not as high as the above mentioned three countries, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique and Sudan also constitute the list of countries highly affected by conflict during the reporting period of the first ten-year of the STGs. The conflict events in these countries contributed for 38% of the conflicts that took place in the continent from 2013 – 2023.

Alongside the rise in conflict frequency, the expanding geographical scope of conflicts also presents a significant concern. While the geographic spread of conflicts has expanded in almost all parts of the continent except North Africa, the above mentioned ten countries—Nigeria, the DRC, Somalia, Ethiopia, CAR, Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Sudan—emerged as the primary hotspots, collectively constituting 84% of conflicts across the continent. It is also important to highlight that the number of conflicts in some countries has significantly increased over time. For example, Burkina Faso had no reported conflicts in 2013 but experienced 607 in 2023. Similarly, Cameroon had only 1 conflict in 2013 and 404 in 2022. On the other hand, some countries had a relatively consistent number of conflicts

²⁷ ACLED, '10 conflicts to worry about in 2022' (2022). Available at: <https://acleddata.com/10-conflicts-to-worry-about-in-2022/nigeria/>

over the years without any indication of improvement. These include conflicts in the CAR, DRC, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

Overall, the data shows that the number of conflict events in Africa are alarmingly significant, and some countries are experiencing an increase in conflict over time. **This could be used as one indicator to conclude that the existing normative frameworks are not being effectively leveraged to tackle the spread of conflicts in the continent.** To further assess this, it may also be relevant to make a comparison between the number of conflicts rather than conflict events with the number of countries in conflict since 2013.²⁸ *Figure 10*, which reveals a general increase in the number of conflicts over the years, peaking in 2022.

However, the number of countries involved does not show a consistent trend and varies year to year. This indicates that while the overall number of conflicts is rising, their distribution among different countries fluctuates.

Despite the inconsistency, countries like Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan have shown to be consistent with an alarming number of conflicts every year.

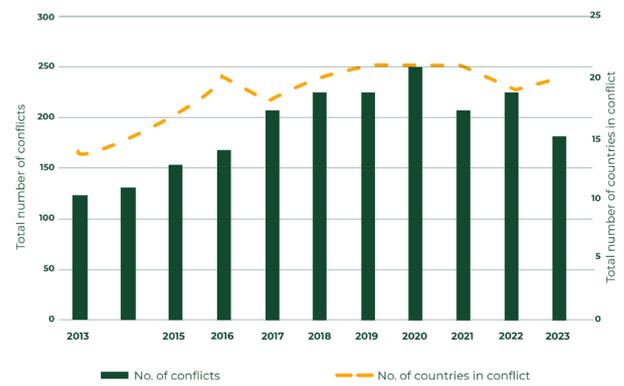


Figure 10: Comparison of number of conflicts and no. of countries in conflict from 2013 to 2023 Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 and UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

Another approach to examining conflicts on the continent is to analyse the numbers of conflicts and conflict events by types of conflicts. This research utilizes data from the UCDP, categorizing conflicts into state-based conflicts, non-state conflicts, one-sided violence, and internationalized conflicts.²⁹ The following part examines, the nature of conflict trends on the continent based on these conflict types.

²⁹ **Note:** * UCDP defines: **'State-based armed conflict'** as: "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year." ** **'A non-state conflict'** as "the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year." *** **'One-sided violence'** as the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths. Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded. **** **'Internationalized Internal Armed Conflict'**: occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s) with intervention from other states (secondary parties) on one or both sides.

²⁸ While **number of conflicts** refers to the total count of distinct conflicts that occur within 2013 - 2023, **number of conflict events** refers to individual incidents or occurrences within a larger conflict.

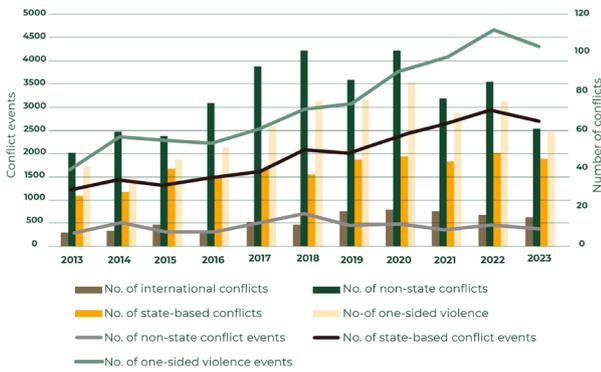


Figure 11: Data of number of conflicts³⁰ and number of conflict events³¹ for each category of conflicts Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 and UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

4.2.1. State-based conflicts

The data on state-based conflicts from 2013 to 2023 in Africa reveals significant insights into the frequency, geographical spread, and number of conflicts. The number of state-based conflict events fluctuated considerably over the decade, beginning with 906 events in 2013 and peaking at 2456 events in 2022 (see figure 12). This represents more than a twofold increase over the period. The highest number of conflict events in 2022 underscores a particular escalation in violence during that year. The increase in conflict events in 2021 and 2022 are linked to periods of intense armed conflict in Ethiopia that caused huge damage to the northern part of the country, notably Tigray region. Similarly, the majority of the conflict events that took place in 2023 are linked to the conflict in Sudan. It is due to that reason the number of state-based conflicts did not see a proportionate rise in those years when compared to the conflict events, indicating that few conflicts were responsible for a high number of events.

³⁰ *Number of conflicts: refers to the total count of distinct conflicts that occur within the past 10 years.

³¹ *Number of conflict events: refers to individual incidents or occurrences within a larger conflict.

The number of countries experiencing conflicts also varied, starting with 14 in 2013, increasing to 20 in 2020, and then decreasing to 15 by 2023. This indicates that while the geographic spread of conflicts has seen some expansion, there is a tendency for conflicts to concentrate in a few regions over time.

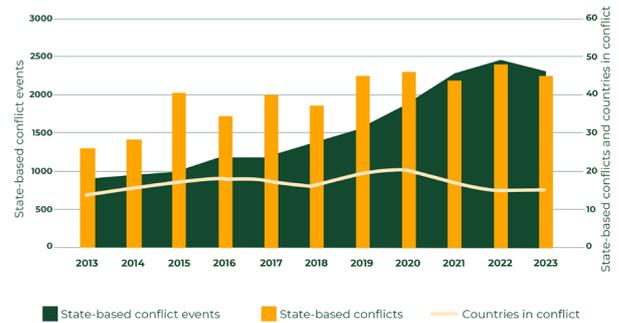


Figure 12: Data of number of state-based conflicts as well as number of conflict events and number of countries in state-based conflicts Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

Furthermore, the number of state-based conflicts, which represent distinct conflict situations, also rose from 26 in 2013 to 48 in 2022 before slightly decreasing to 45 in 2023. This trend suggests a growing complexity and multiplicity of conflicts, with several countries experiencing multiple concurrent conflicts.

When looking at the overall data of state-based conflicts and conflict events, it reflects that not only an increase in the frequency of violent encounters but also an expansion in the regions affected by state-based conflicts. The impact and spread of state-based conflicts have also resulted in the death of numerous people in the continent (see figure 13). Fatalities from state-based conflicts show a dramatic increase, especially from 2020 onwards.

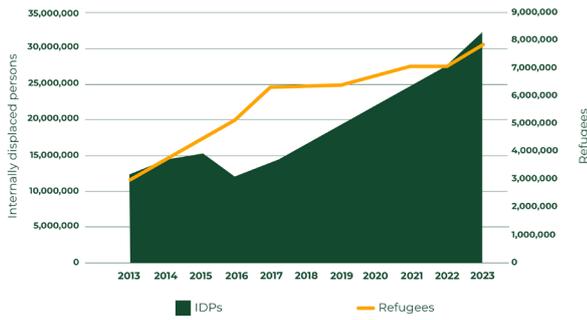


Figure 13: Data of state-based conflict events and fatalities that resulted from state-based conflicts Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

While the number of conflict events has increased over the years, the rise in fatalities has been disproportionately higher, especially in 2021 and 2022. For instance, in 2020, 1,905 conflict events resulted in 30,928 fatalities. In contrast, in 2022, a similar number of conflict events (2,456) led to a dramatically higher number of fatalities conservatively reported at 175,559, although there are indications that this number is actually much higher even by the accounts of the civil war in Ethiopia alone. This indicates that conflicts have either become more lethal and/or that larger-scale conflicts have occurred.

If one looks into the overall data of state-based conflicts from 2013 – 2023, Somalia is most affected, followed by Nigeria, Ethiopia, the DRC, Mali and Cameroon. A significant recent conflict that contributed to the high fatality rates is the war in the northern region of Ethiopia, which accounted for 93% of the total fatalities in 2022. The other countries like the DRC, Nigeria, and Somalia have shown consistently high numbers of conflict events and fatalities, with significant peaks in recent years. Burkina Faso, in particular, has shown a notable rise in conflict events starting from 2019, with the highest count in 2022.

4.2.2. One-sided violence

The number of conflicts involving one-sided violence has seen significant fluctuations, with a clear peak in 2020 that continued into 2021, followed by a slight decline. While the decline in the past three years is relative to the peak year, there is still a 43% increase in the number of one-sided violence events when comparing 2013 to 2023. This indicates an increase in the number of armed groups.

The DRC is the most affected country, experiencing up to 26 one-sided conflicts per year and registering 3467 conflict events over the past 10 years. Other countries significantly impacted by one-sided violence include Burkina Faso, CAR, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, and Sudan. In these countries, including the DRC, the frequency of conflict events has shown a fluctuating increase over the past decade.³² (see Figure 14). However, in some countries like the CAR, there has been a decline in one-sided violence events.

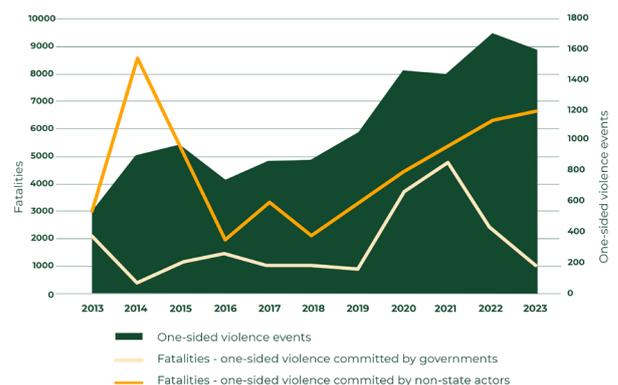


Figure 14: One-sided violence events and fatalities that resulted from one-sided violence (by governments and non-state actors) Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 and UCDP One-sided Violence Dataset version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

32 Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan.

In general, there is an increase in the number of one-sided violence events, with the data indicating an upward trend that peaked in 2022 at 1709 events. The number of events rose from 2013 to 2020, experienced a slight drop in 2021, and then increased again in the following years. Over the past 10 years, these events have resulted in the deaths of 71,175 civilians. Of these fatalities, governments are reportedly responsible for 28.4%, while non-state actors are responsible for 71%.

Examining the data on fatalities caused by government forces reveals significant fluctuations. The overall trend does not show a clear increase or decrease but rather significant year-to-year variations. After a significant drop in 2014, there were fluctuations with a spike in 2021 (4850 fatalities) followed by a decline in subsequent years.

On the other hand, civilian fatalities resulting from one-sided violence by non-state actors show a general increasing trend, but with major fluctuations. Aside from the peak in 2014, the highest fatalities were recorded in 2023 (6676), indicating a consistent rise over the last three years. The major peak in 2014, with 8658 fatalities, was mainly attributed to Nigeria, with 5104 fatalities, and the CAR, with 2295 fatalities. In Nigeria, Boko Haram was responsible for more than 95% of civilian fatalities that year. In the CAR, the Anti-Balaka and the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic (FPRC) were responsible for the majority of fatalities. The rising trend in the last three years (2021 – 2023) suggests an escalation in violence by non-state actors, particularly the increased attack by terrorist groups such as the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen (JNIM) in Burkina Faso, IS in DRC, Mali and Mozambique and in 2023

the RSF in Sudan.

4.2.3. Non-state conflicts

The number of non-state conflicts has shown a steady increase from 48 in 2013 to a peak of 101 in 2018. This represents an increase of 110% over this period. After 2018, the data shows a fluctuation and a decrease in 2023. Despite the decrease in 2023, when comparing 2013 to 2023, the number of non-state conflicts has increased from 48 to 61, reflecting an overall rise despite fluctuations, with an approximate increase of 27%.

In assessing the correlation between the number of conflicts, conflict events and fatalities relating to non-state conflicts, one can observe that from 2013 to 2023, non-state conflicts exhibited significant variability in terms of fatalities, the number of conflicts, and conflict events (see figure 15). The average annual fatalities were approximately 4,191, with the highest recorded in 2018 (5,802) and the lowest in 2019 (3,265). In 2018, the number of non-state conflict events have shown a 138% increase from 2013. This increase is due to inter-communal and militia or organized criminal violence in Nigeria, conflict between the DPF and Forces of House of Representatives in Libya and conflicts involving the two Boko Haram factions and inter-communal clashes in Mali. The increase in the number of conflict events has continued until 2020 and compared to 2013, the 2023 data indicates a 28% increase.

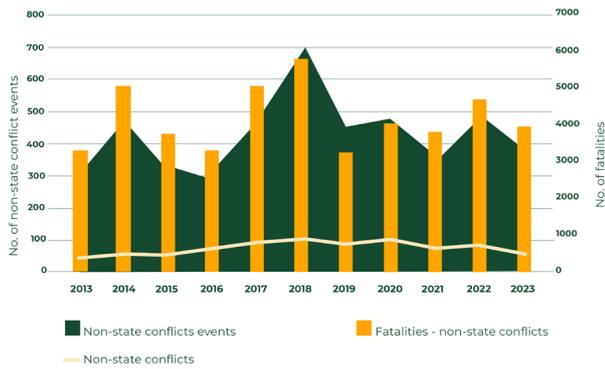


Figure 15: Non-state conflicts, conflict events and fatalities that resulted from non-state conflicts Source: UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1 and UCDP One-sided Violence Dataset version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

On average, there were about 76 non-state conflicts per year, peaking at 101 in both 2018 and 2020, and dropping to a minimum of 48 in 2023. Non-state conflict events averaged around 431 annually, with a high of 701 in 2018 and a low of 294 in 2023. Year-over-year changes highlighted significant fluctuations, including a 52.98% increase in fatalities in 2014 and a 43.73% decrease in 2019. **Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship (0.44) between fatalities and the number of non-state conflicts, a strong positive relationship (0.85) between fatalities and conflict events, and a positive relationship (0.71) between the number of conflicts and conflict events. These trends indicate an overall increase in the severity and frequency of non-state conflicts.**

Both the number of non-state conflicts and conflict events generally follow a similar trend, indicating that an increase in the number of conflicts often correlates with an increase in conflict events. Although there is a fluctuation in the rate with which the conflict events have increased, the correlation indicates that the non-state conflict events have gradually increased since 2013. The number of non-

state conflicts and the number of affected countries also correlate, suggesting that as conflicts spread, they affect more countries.

The UCDP datasets include both an aggregated dataset of conflict types (UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global version 24.1), which includes non-state conflicts, and another dataset (UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset version 24.1) that focuses exclusively on various variables of non-state conflicts. However, some conflict IDs appear in the aggregated dataset but are missing from the non-state conflict dataset, leading to discrepancies in the number of conflicts reported in each dataset. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the number of non-state conflicts varies between the two datasets. However, the research has relied on the UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset version 24.1 to analyse the different types of non-state conflicts (see figure 16). The UCDP Non-State Conflicts data classifies non-state conflicts into three categories: formally organized groups³³, informally organized groups³⁴ and communal conflicts.³⁵

³³ ***Formally organized groups:** 'Rebel groups and other organized groups that have a high enough level of organization so as to be possible to include in the state-based armed conflict category. These include rebel groups with an announced name, as well as military factions.'

³⁴ ***Informally organized groups:** 'Groups composed of supporters and affiliates to political parties and candidates. These are commonly not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times use their organizational structures for such purposes.'

³⁵ ***Communal conflicts:** this are also referred as informally organized groups. 'But these are groups 'Groups that share a common identification along ethnic, clan, religious, national or tribal lines. These are not groups that are permanently organized for combat, but who at times organize themselves along said lines to engage in fighting'.

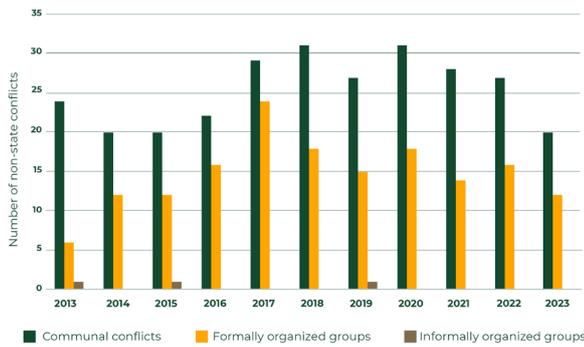


Figure 16: Data of the three categories of non-state conflicts Source: UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset version 24.1 (Davies, Shawn, Garoun Engström, Therese Pettersson & Magnus Öberg 2024).

Over the past ten years, communal conflicts consistently remain the most prevalent, with a total of 279 incidents, taking the majority of non-state conflicts. The data shows a general increase from 24 in 2013 to a peak of 31 in 2018 and 2020, before a decline to 20 in 2023. While Nigeria is the most affected with communal conflicts, with 27%, Sudan and South Sudan follow by owning 20% and 19% respectively. Although it is not as significant as the other countries, the DRC and Ethiopia are also highly affected by communal conflicts.

Conflicts involving formally organized groups also show fluctuations, peaking at 24 in 2017 and totalling 163 over the period. The DRC and Libya are the most affected with 27% and 17% respectively. These countries are followed by the CAR, Mali and Nigeria. On the other hand, incidents involving informally organized groups (groups composed of supporters of political parties) are the least frequent, with only 3 recorded events in the entire period. Overall, the data indicates that communal conflicts are the most prevalent form of non-state conflict, while formally organized groups also contribute significantly to the conflict landscape.

4.2.4. Internationalized Internal Armed Conflicts

Internationalized internal armed conflicts have steadily increased, indicating a rise in conflicts involving multiple states or international actors. The data shows a general upward trend from 2013 (7 conflicts) to a peak in 2020 (19 conflicts), representing a 63% increase from the previous year. Following this peak, there is a slight decline towards 2023 (15 conflicts), but the numbers remain higher than in the early years.

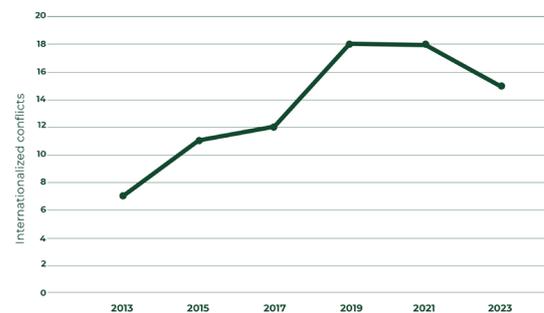


Figure 17: Total Number of internationalized conflicts (2013 - 2023) Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database

The countries most affected by internationalized internal armed conflicts are the DRC, Mali, and Nigeria. From 2013 – 2023 Nigeria had been engaged in 21 conflicts, with persistent involvement from groups like JAS and IS. Similarly, the DRC was involved in 21 conflicts, with diverse actors such as Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), National Coalition of the People for the Sovereignty of Congo (CNPSC), and March 23 Movement (M23). Mali was on the other hand engaged in 19 conflicts, consistently involving groups like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and JNIM.

While these nations experience significant impacts, Burkina Faso, CAR, and Somalia are also notably affected by internationalized conflicts, though to a slightly lesser extent. Somalia participated in 14 conflicts, with Al-Shabaab being

a prominent actor. While the CAR was engaged in 11 conflicts, involving groups like anti-Balaka and CPC, **Burkina Faso** was involved in 10 conflicts, mainly with IS and JNIM.

When looking at the overall internationalized internal armed conflict situation in the continent, the most dominant aspect of the internationalization involved the activities of terrorist groups operating across national borders and sometimes with transnational links. The persistence of terrorist groups highlights the challenges faced in the approach to counterterrorism, with its heavy focus on security heavy instruments. It underscores the need for coordinated, multi-faceted approaches that address not only the military aspects but also the underlying socio-economic and political factors that contribute to their resilience.

4.3. The Human Impact of Conflict in Africa

Our analysis in the previous section clearly indicates the significant impact on the population. The conflicts can result in death, displacement, and economic instability. In addition to the human cost of conflict, there are also economic consequences. Conflict can disrupt trade and investment, leading to reduced economic growth and development. This can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and instability, making it even harder to resolve the conflicts. Therefore, in examining the state of peace of the continent other indicators are the number of fatalities, internally displaced persons and refugees.

Apart from what has been discussed in the previous section with regards to the deadlines of the three conflict types

(state-based, non-state and one-sided violence), it is important to present an overall view of the fatality rate from 2013 – 2023.



Figure 18: Total Number of fatalities due to armed conflicts in Africa (2013 - 2023) Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database

Between 2013 and 2023, conflict-related fatalities and the number of conflict events displayed distinct trends and patterns. On average, there were 49,711 fatalities annually, with a notable peak in 2021 reaching 188,947, and a significant drop in 2023 to 32,797. The year-over-year changes highlight a sharp increase in fatalities in 2021 (245.80%). Conflict events steadily rose from 1,671 in 2013 to a peak of 4,555 in 2022, with minor fluctuations. **The strong positive correlation (0.72) between fatalities and events indicates that as the number of conflict events increased, so did the fatalities. Notable spikes in fatalities in 2020 and 2021 suggest major conflicts or escalations during these years, while the consistent rise in conflict events points to growing instability over the decade.** As it was mentioned in the previous section the 2022 spike indicated in the graph is mainly due to the conflict that affected the Tigray region in Ethiopia.³⁶ Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's former President and AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa was quoted saying 'as many as 600,000

³⁶ This conflict with a reported more than 600,000 fatalities represents the deadliest war of the 21st century.

people may have been killed in Ethiopia's brutal two-year long civil war in the Tigray region'.³⁷

Another indication of the increase in the scale and severity of conflicts is the humanitarian consequences of conflicts, illustrated by the number of IDPs and refugees/asylum seekers. As it can be indicated in the graph below the number of IDPs and refugees has increased exponentially in the past ten years (see figure 19). **The number of refugees rose from 3,005,564 in 2013 to 7,849,918 in 2023, while IDPs increased from 12,500,000 to 32,420,020 during the same period.** This upward trend indicates a steady rise in displacement due to various factors, of which conflict and political instability are the major culprits. The correlation between the number of refugees and IDPs is very high at 0.93, suggesting that similar factors influence both groups. The analysis reveals substantial year-on-year growth in both categories, with notable increases in 2013-2014 for refugees and 2022-2023 for IDPs.

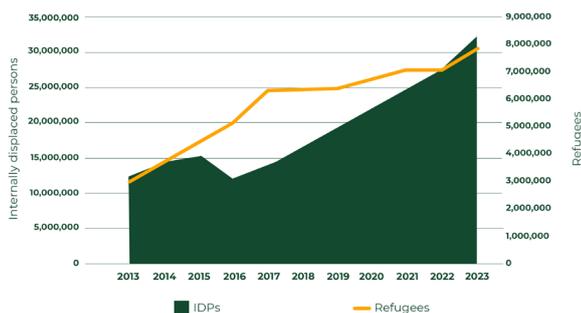


Figure 19: Number of IDPs and Refugees (2013 - 2023) Source: IDMC and UNHCR

The overall trend across most countries shows a significant increase in the number of refugees from 2013 to 2023. The grand total increases from 12.47 million in 2013

³⁷ British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Focus On Africa, 'Obasanjo: War in Tigray has killed 600,000. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0dwrw4c>

to over 32.5 million in 2023, illustrating a dramatic escalation in displacement due to a number of factors, most notably conflict and political instability.

The data suggests an upward trend in the number of refugees and IDPs, indicating an ongoing continental crisis of forced displacement. The number of IDPs increased each year, with the largest increase occurring between 2016 and 2017. Most countries show relatively modest numbers during these 2013–2015, with few exceptions like DRC, Nigeria, and Somalia. A clear upward trend starts between 2016 - 2020, particularly in countries like Burkina Faso, South Sudan, and Sudan. The jump suggests that crises either began or escalated during these years. For example, in Burkina Faso there is a noticeable spike starting in 2016, with numbers escalating rapidly to 4.1 million by 2023 when the number of IDPs increased by almost 3.5 million. Similarly, in Somalia the numbers start high in 2013 (2.2 million) and drastically increase starting from 2017 and rise significantly to over 7.7 million by 2023.

The numbers continued to peak in many countries during 2021 - 2023. For instance, Sudan's numbers in 2023 are dramatically higher than previous years, suggesting a link to the outbreak of war in the country in April 2023. **In 2023, the number of IDPs reached to about three times the number in 2013.**

Furthermore, when comparing the countries with the highest number of IDPs in 2013 and 2023, the data shows that the number of IDPs has increased in almost all countries over the years. The DRC has the highest number of IDPs in both years, with a total of more than 45 million IDPs within the ten-year period

and the number of IDPs almost doubled from 2,964,000 IDPs in 2013 to 6,734,000 in 2023. This is a 127% increase over the 10-year period, and it is the highest increase among all African countries. Sudan follows with a total of 36 million in the ten-year period and when comparing 2013 with 2023 the data shows nearly 3-fold increase in IDPs over the decade highlighting a dramatic escalation in displacement within Sudan. According to the IOM Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, conflicts in Sudan and the DRC, when added with Palestine accounted for nearly two-thirds of new conflict movements in 2023. In 2023, Sudan has the highest number of IDPs in the continent, with over 9 million people displaced. This is largely due to the recent outbreak of violence in 2023, ongoing conflicts in Darfur, and instability in other regions. The situation in Sudan has been observed to be a humanitarian disaster on a massive scale.

Nigeria has the third-highest number of IDPs with more than 27 million, while Somalia and Ethiopia complete the top five countries with the highest number of IDPs with 24 million and 18 million respectively.

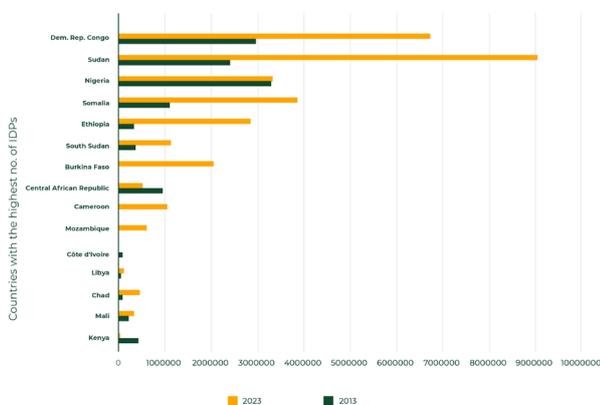


Figure 20: The top 15 Countries with the highest number of IDPs Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (iDMC)

Some countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mozambique, and Cameroon had no reported IDPs in 2013, but by 2023, Burkina Faso had 2,063,000, Mozambique had 592,000, and Cameroon had 1,044,000. Interestingly, CAR had the most significant drop in the number of IDPs, with 935,000 in 2013, which decreased to 512,000 in 2023, while Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and South Sudan saw a significant increase in the number of IDPs, when comparing 2013 and 2023. However, it should be noted that although a decline in the number of IDPs in CAR had been observed when comparing 2013 and 2023, it does not mean the situation have improved. For instance, CAR has shown a constant highest in the number of IDPs in the ten-years period, the lowest number being 412,000 that was recorded in 2016. Countries that have shown a decrease like CAR but with a high number of IDPs cannot be used as an indication of improvement. The fact that they still have a significant number of IDPs indicate that conflict and displacement are still major issues in these countries. Conflicts in Sudan, the DRC, and Palestine accounted for nearly two-thirds of new conflict movements in 2023

The increase in the number of IDPs shows that conflict situations in many African countries have not improved, but instead have worsened over the years. The number of displaced people on the continent has significantly risen since 2020, with notable increases reported in conflicts across the Sahel, the DRC, Ethiopia, and Sudan. In particular, the DRC saw an alarming spike of nearly one million forcibly displaced individuals during the first half of 2023. Additionally, the conflict in Sudan resulted in an unprecedented displacement of over 7 million people, marking a dire humanitarian crisis. As

such, the data highlights the devastating impact of conflict on civilian populations, leading to internal displacement and other humanitarian crises.

Comparably, the number of refugees has also shown a drastic increase when comparing the year 2013 and 2023. The overall number of refugees from these countries has grown substantially, from approximately 3.1 million in 2013 to over 7.8 million in 2023. This marks a more than twofold increase over the decade. There are consistent year-on-year increases in the number of refugees, with particularly sharp increases observed from 2016 to 2017 and from 2019 to 2020. The data shows that the number of refugees has significantly increased in most African countries when comparing 2013 and 2023 (see *figure 21*). Regionally, **East African** countries like Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan dominate in terms of refugee outflows, reflecting the region's chronic instability and conflict. While **West Africa** countries like Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Mali show significant refugee outflows, the numbers are relatively lower compared to East Africa. In **Central Africa**, the DRC and CAR are prominent sources of refugees, largely due to ongoing conflicts and political instability.

South Sudan has the highest number of refugees in the ten-years period with 16.6 million refugees from 2013 to 2023 and the country have also recorded the highest number in 2023, with 2.29 million people seeking refuge, which is 20 times higher than the number of refugees in 2013. This increase was due to the civil war in the country, which began in 2013 and has caused a consistent displacement and forced migration. Similarly, following South Sudan, the DRC, Somalia and Sudan also experienced a significant

increase in the number of refugees, with both countries having more than 80% increase in refugees from 2013 to 2023.

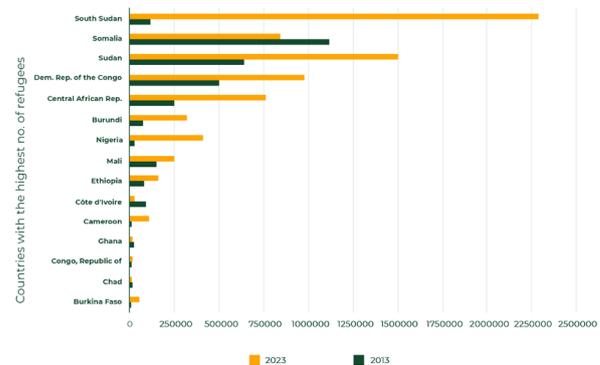


Figure 21: The top 15 Countries with the highest number of refugees Source: UNHCR

However, there were some countries that experienced a decrease in the number of refugees, such as Somalia. In 2023, Somalia had 842,044 refugees, which is 30% less than the number of refugees in 2013. **This decrease may be attributed to the relative success of stabilization measures, with support of the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM/ATMIS).** Another interesting observation is that some countries, such as Mali, Nigeria and Ethiopia show high but fluctuating refugee numbers, often corresponding with periods of heightened conflict or political instability.

V. BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND REALITY IN STGs: THE NEED FOR A NOT BUSINESS-AS-USUAL APPROACH TO CONFLICTS

How should we stop watching terrorism ravage some of our countries, without doing anything? How can we accept just watching African countries destroyed, entire Regions engulfed by tremours and Tsunamis, without doing anything significant? How can we rediscover our African humanity, the basis of our identity and our common destiny?

AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat

The data and the accompanying analysis both from the situations on the agenda of the PSC and from various conflict datasets examined in previous sections attest to the fact that instead of being silenced the guns have become louder. The increase in the number of conflicts, their geographic spread and the severity of their impacts are making a mockery of AU's agenda of STGs. There is no clear sign of this changing as the AU embarked on the second phase of the STGs whose timeline is set to end in 2030. The various sources of data and the accompanying analysis suggest that the approach to STGs pursued during the first ten-year period had largely failed. In his address to the opening session of the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 17 February 2024 in which he posed the questions quoted above, AU Commission Chairperson candidly painted the grim state of the situation noting that 'terrorism is destroying some of our States... Unconstitutional Changes

of Government have multiplied in total defiance of the entire political-legal order that founded our Organisation... Instead of being joyful modes of peaceful transfer or maintenance of power, elections have become, through the extent of their irregularities, factors for deepening crises.'³⁸

A major factor that facilitated these conditions the diplomacy and leadership vacuum that emerged in recent years. This vacuum emerged in the context of the major demographic changes taking place on the continent and the weakening of the commitment of leaders to the ethos of Pan-Africanism as encapsulated in AU's norms and policies. It manifests itself in the prevalence of disregard for constitutional rule of which the resurgence of coups is only one manifestation, the impending breakdown of regional orders in West Africa and the Sahel, and the threat of such breakdowns in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions, as well as reemergence of inter-state tensions—such as those between the DRC and Rwanda, and Ethiopia and Somalia—along with their far-reaching consequences for regional peace and security.

These conditions and the clear admissions by Mahamat about the poor state of the peace and security landscape and most notably the failure to mobilize effective responses to the escalating insecurity suggest the urgency for change of course. Perhaps the most important intervention for STGs has to happen at the level where the guns are already in

³⁸ *Speech of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Thirty Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (17 February 2024), available on: <https://shorturl.at/fnxDR>.*

use or where there are risks of guns being used. Accordingly, it matters a great deal whether silencing the guns mean much more than the business-as-usual approach to responding to or dealing with ongoing conflicts. Instead, **STGs has to entail a more effective mobilization of collective action for ending of violent conflicts** and preventing the eruption of new ones. This necessitates that instead of thematic focused approach and complementing such thematic focused engagements such as addressing the scourge of small arms and light weapons, **targeted intervention must be deployed for resolving ongoing violent conflicts in a very decisive, forceful, concerted form with the urgency required for achieving resolution.**

Strategy to silence the guns tailored to each conflict situation

In the light of the apparent deterioration of the peace and security conditions on the continent and the AU Commission Chairperson's assessment quoted above, it is clear that silencing the guns has changed nothing from the business-as-usual approach to peace and security. Unless the way Africa deals with existing and newly erupting conflicts and its approach to conflict management & resolution changes, no tangible results will be achieved in terms of changing the trajectory of conflicts and achieve progress in the ambitious goal of STGs.

So, one must ask and find policy answers to the question: what does silencing the guns mean in the various ongoing conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC and those not on its agenda? One must ask and find policy answers about what has been done and what needs to change and be done for achieving the

goal of silencing the guns in each of these situations?

Clearly, it is not possible to have a one size approach or policy to the agenda of silencing the guns in all instances of ongoing conflicts. This means that there is a need for designing and deploying the kind of conflict management and resolution instrument tailored to the specificities of each conflict at a level and time that guarantees higher degree of success for resolution under conditions that present either incentives for opting for ending conflicts or higher costs for continuing with the use of guns.

Adapting the implementation of the APSA and AU's peace and security tools to the changing security dynamics

The prevailing peace and security conditions necessitate the reassessment of the adequacy of the political and security tools. Most importantly, it necessitates reconsideration of the approach, on the part of policy makers, of their appreciation of the grave conflict landscape and how these political and security instruments are adapted and deployed to be impactful.

The emergence of terrorism as the dominant peace and security crisis with parts of the continent becoming epicentre of terrorism not only in Africa but also globally has at least three strategic implications for the AU and its conflict prevention, management and resolution tools. The first is the increasing demand for approaches that involve a mix of stabilization, peace enforcement and peacebuilding capacities that leverage and are deployed along with livelihood supporting development

interventions. The other is the growing need for protection of civilians and equally growing demand for facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Third, it necessitates the use of negotiation, mediation and reconciliation for such unconventional conflict situations.

There is a need for paying increasing attention to intercommunal conflicts that constitute the majority of non-state conflicts in Africa. This necessitates enhancing the development and use of peace and security tools tailored to addressing such non-state conflicts. Of interest in this respect are the need for enhancing the mapping of intercommunal conflicts and their trends through the Continental Early Warning system. It also necessitates the enhanced use of interventions that target the impacts of climate change, enhance peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms between diverse communities and deliver livelihood enhancing and other adaptation support.

Moreover, the rising prominence of geopolitical rivalries on the international stage, notably in the aftermath of the Russia-Ukraine war, has intensified foreign involvement by both old and emerging powers as well as regional and other international actors in conflicts in Africa, thereby deepening the trend of internationalization of conflicts in Africa. As highlighted in Amani Africa's 2023 annual review of PSC activities, this trend is making a 'mockery of the already deeply misunderstood and misused mantra of African solutions to African problems.'³⁹ The conflicts in Libya and Sudan exemplify how foreign interference has complicated mediation efforts while sidelining the AU

as a key player in these processes. This growing interference by foreign powers and other international actors, leading to increased internationalization of conflicts in Africa, is not only shaping conflict dynamics and political behavior of conflict parties but also undermining the agency of regional and continental policymakers in addressing conflicts and political crises, further straining continental conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms. The AU needs to build on earlier practice of constituting international contact groups as one avenue. Additionally, it needs to develop strategy for regions most affected by such external interference focused on enhancing the engagement of all actors on the basis of agreed frameworks guided by multilateral principles.

In the light of the enormous humanitarian consequences of the roaring guns in Africa, there is a need for the AU to institutionalize humanitarian diplomacy as a critical tool and essential component of its crises and conflict response tool box. It is also critical that AU's engagement on humanitarian issues goes beyond a generic thematic discussion within the framework of the PSC. Instead, it should address and have a dedicated engagement specifically on the humanitarian situation each conflict setting with a view to pushing the adoption of measures for ameliorating the suffering of those caught up in these humanitarian crises.

It is clear from the foregoing that there is a need for a strategic review of the situation on the continent and the issues impeding the effective role of the AU, the APSA and the STGs. Such a strategic review should be one of the priorities of the new leadership of the AU following

³⁹ Amani Africa, 'The Peace and Security Council in 2023: the Year in Review,' (February 2024), p.7.

the elections in February 2025. This can draw inspiration from the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace.

Effective and impartial AU and RECs/RMs bureaucracy

In his New Agenda for Peace Policy Brief, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated that 'an effective collective security system relies on an international civil service that is strong, efficient and impartial.' He went on to state that '[t]he impartiality of the (UN) Secretariat is and will remain its strong asset...particularly as fractures at the global level widen.' Beyond and above being a key marker of an international civil service, impartiality, as Guterres rightly noted, 'is vital in helping build trust among Member states.' These observations on the imperative of impartial international bureaucracy are true for the AU and RECs/RMs as well. Where member states feel that the bureaucracy is impartial and has fidelity to agreed norms and principles in its operation, they are more disposed to engage and support the initiatives of the bureaucracy.

It is of paramount importance that the policy making bureaucracy at the AU and RECs/RMs levels shows technical competence and strategic and operational impartiality and professionalism for rebuilding trust and credibility not only on the part of member states but also the wider African public. It should also demonstrate fidelity to the norms and policies on which policy making for silencing the guns has to be anchored. Not any less important are diplomatic imagination and serious sense of responsibility and urgency in how it tracks, detects and mobilizes response to conflicts. As the machinery that anchors and catalyses peace and security

decision-making, the importance of enhancing these attributes on the part of the bureaucracy at the AU and RECs/RMs levels cannot be overemphasized.

Prioritize conflict prevention with emphasis on diplomacy and the primacy of politics

Many of the conflicts now dominating the continent's security landscape did not emerge suddenly. They are the result of long-simmering tensions stemming from interconnected factors such as governance deficits, political marginalization, environmental pressures, and socio-economic challenges. Yet, the PSC's focus has remained predominantly on conflict management, with persistent gaps in early warning and early action hindering its ability to proactively address emerging threats.⁴⁰

There is a need for rethinking the tendency that has emerged over the years on the part of policy makers that the policy response the continent needs is throwing weapons at the peace and security challenges, particularly conflicts involving terrorist groups and insurgents. The result of the dominance of this policy thinking has been the rise in the resort to highly securitized responses but without success in stemming the tide of the expansion of such conflicts.⁴¹ Even when

⁴⁰ See Amani Africa, 'The African Union Peace and Security Council at 20', pp.17-18; and Oita Etyang, Taye Abdulkadir, Claudia Masah and Tatenda Mapiro, ACCORD Policy and Practice brief, 'Evaluation of the African Union Peace and Security Council: Lessons from 20 years of intervention and recommendations for the future', pp.6-7, available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/publication/evaluation-of-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-lessons-from-20-years-of-intervention-and-recommendations-for-the-future/>

⁴¹ See Amani Africa, *The growing threat of terrorism in Africa, a product of misdiagnosis and faulty*

peace operations involving combat are necessary, they do not dispense with the need for political strategy and diplomacy. If anything, there is a higher need for the use of and anchoring such operations on robust political strategy pursued through robust diplomatic instruments backed by socio-economic interventions including livelihood and socio-economic rehabilitation support.

Additionally, **AU's role in conflict prevention suffered a major institutional setback in the context of the AU institutional reform.** The first setback relates to the removal of the dedicated structure for the Continental Early Warning System in the AU. This deprived the AU of the division that assumes responsibility for early warning and conflict prevention. The second institutional setback was the merger of the Political Affairs and Peace and Security Departments into the current Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department. For an organization whose effectiveness depends on building consensus and mobilizing political commitment of member states for collective action, the merger has unwittingly diminished AU's already lacklustre implementation of the work on political affairs. Since the merger, the dominance of the peace and security work tends to take much of the space and to suck much of the air for political affairs with its focus on conflict prevention to get the space and attention it requires.

Under the new AU Commission leadership, there is a need for rethinking these institutional setbacks and ensure that corrective measures are taken to

policy response?, Special Research Report 13 (May 2022) available on <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/The-growing-threat-of-terrorism-in-Africa.pdf>

assign political affairs and its role in conflict prevention and diplomacy its own dedicated institutional set up and space as critical measure for prioritising conflict prevention and elevating the role of diplomacy.

There is clearly a need for a much forceful and proactive approach to conflict prevention if new conflicts are to be prevented from erupting. This entails that the AU and RECs/RMs as well as international organizations such as the UN and partners are able to effectively map situations that face risks of violent conflicts and initiate timely policy intervention to prevent such risks from materializing. Here as well there is a need for change in approach. An important aspect of this change is to reorganize both conflict prevention and response to conflicts as acts and instruments of solidarity with the country and the people concerned rather than as an external intervention and an exercise in policing states. For conflict prevention, this requires the use of non-intrusive and less security-oriented approaches and tools to prevention. **This emphasizes the importance of identifying opportunities for avoiding or mitigating risks of conflicts and hence sustaining peace by harnessing the leverage of non-security tools and role of national actors positioned to create space for de-escalation, negotiation and relevant reforms which are critical for prevention, bolstering resilience, addressing root causes and sustaining peace.** Such shifts in approach and methodology help address the not-so-misplaced concern of states about the risk of internationalization of internal disputes and the associated loss of influence by national actors over how it would be addressed or resolved.

Similarly, there is also a need for a more effective use and mobilization of conflict prevention efforts as a critical tool for achieving the STGs in Africa. This necessitates that reform measures are initiated to address the democratic deficit, the growing economic malaise, and the growing gap and breakdown of the social contract between state and society due to failure of the state to deliver on its obligations towards the citizenry.

Institutionally, this entails that the AU reconsiders the recent institutional setback that weakened the AU's CEWS by restoring the dedicated division for early warning and conflict prevention. Most significantly, member states need to reconsider the merger of political affairs and peace and security in the context of the institutional reform of the AU. This is critical to create a department that takes full responsibility and provides dedicated leadership on advancing the search for political solutions and the promotion of conflict prevention measures.

Renewing the social contract between AU member states, RECs/RMS and AU Commission

The erosion in the leadership role of the AU is not merely a function of the weak state of politics in member states or the use by member states of the defence of sovereignty. It is also attributable to the decline in the effectiveness of the AU Commission in providing the technical guidance for catalysing collective diplomatic action of member states and the erosion of trust between the Commission and member states.

The proposed changes in approach and methodology to STGs and the leadership vacuum noted above require

that member states of the AU, RECs/RMs and the AU Commission renew the social contract that is the source of their *raison d'être* by reaffirming their commitment to and willingness to uphold the norms and policies they have adopted. The AU Commission, as custodian of AU instruments, bears particular responsibility in leading the charge in this respect, including most notably by defending these norms through facilitating adherence by states to the norms and policies that they have committed to. It is also critical to recommit and bolster the use of the ethos of Pan-Africanism and the principle of non-indifference in inspiring the search for solutions and in mobilizing consensus and common ground for collective action on the basis of AU norms and policies.

Reinvigorating the use of AU led peace support operations

The AU has been successful in the deployment of peace support operations most particularly during the first decade of the operationalization of the PSC. Since its deployment to Mali and the CAR, the AU has not initiated any major deployment of peace support operations under its command.⁴² This is not because there have not been situations in need of peace support operations. Indeed, the proliferation of ad hoc missions by affected countries and regional interventions are indicative of the growing need for peace support operations unmet by the AU. Apart from major resource constraints, AU's inability or failure to deploy major peace support operations during the past decade is in the main due to the fact that the AU has become hugely behind the curve in mobilizing timely engagement

⁴² MOUACA, a military observer mission deployed to CAR, ended without having been effectively operationalized.

in situations directly implicating its peace and security mandate. The huge vacuum that this situation occasioned had led to not only the proliferation of ad hoc coalitions of the willing, regional deployments, bilateral interventions but also the enlisting of private military companies in conflict hot spots such as CAR, Mozambique and the Sahel. These developments have not only led to the increasing marginalization of the AU and the PSC but also are endangering the fragmentation of the APSA, as more and more peace operations are undertaken outside of and without the application of APSA norms and policies.

In the light of the major security vacuum that AU's inability to deploy has created forcing some member states to seek support from other sources including private military companies and the risk of fragmentation facing the APSA as a result of it, there is a need for the PSC to request **a comprehensive assessment of the challenges to the deployment of peace support operations within the framework of the APSA and the ASF norms and policies and present proposals on how to reinforce effective and proactive use of AU led PSOs.**

Address the credibility crisis arising from lack of implementation of AU policies and decisions

In his address during the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly on 17 February 2024, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, powerfully highlighted the profound failure to follow-up on the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly. He stated that 'the frantic tendency to make decisions without real political will to

implement them, has grown to such an extent that it has become devastating to our individual and collective credibility.'⁴³ As an alarming statistic, he pointed out that 'over the last three years 2021, 2022 and 2023, 93% of decisions have not been implemented.' This stark reality is also evident in the context of the PSC, which faces a significant challenge in tracking and implementing its decisions. While AU Commission Chairperson blamed this state of affairs on AU member states and the RECs/RMs, the AU Commission itself is not free from sharing the blame considering that, in relation to the PSC, its record of lack of implementation of decisions, including those that are within its means and capacity, has over the years been on the rise.

The PSC recognized this enormous challenge during the various retreats on its working methods, including the latest one convened in November 2023 in Tunis, Tunisia. To address the challenge on the implementation of the PSC decisions, the Tunis retreat agreed to take three important measures.⁴⁴ The first is dedicating two sessions annually to the evaluation of the status of the implementation of the PSC and Assembly decisions on peace and security in the continent. Secondly, the PSC mandated the PSC Committee of Experts, supported by the PAPS Department, with developing a 'matrix on the status of implementation of council decisions that include an impact assessment.' Thirdly, as an interim measure, it was agreed for the PSC Secretariat to attach to the Concept/

⁴³ *Speech of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Thirty Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (17 February 2024), available on: <https://shorturl.at/fnxDR>.*

⁴⁴ *The Conclusions of Tunis retreat (November 2023), p.3.*

Briefing Note prepared for specific sessions a matrix indicating decisions taken on the particular issue in the past, the state of the implementation of such decisions, and centre of responsibility for its implementation.

It is thus of particular significance that steps are taken to translate the decisions taken during the 15th (Tunis) retreat of the PSC on its working methods as a matter of priority. Additionally, **there is also a need to make the decisions that the PSC adopts actionable in three ways: by providing a timeframe for implementation when appropriate, by considering the budget implications of each decision and by assigning responsibility for follow up and implementation as well as reporting on progress.**

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: FROM THE ROARING GUNS OF THE PRESENT BACK TO SILENCING THE GUNS

The data and analysis presented in this research report shows that Africa has experienced regression with respect to its STGs agenda since the inauguration of the agenda in May 2013. It makes it evident that this regression in the conflict landscape of Africa is alarming in its scale and impact. This feature of the peace and security outlook of the continent in the ten years since the launch of STGs is characterized by the persistence of existing conflicts and the eruption of new conflicts as well as the proliferation of emerging threats to peace and security. It is as if the worsening conflict situation in Africa has gone from the frying pan to the fire itself. While structural factors undoubtedly account for much of these conditions, poor

leadership and its impact on poor governance both at national and continental levels play critical part in terms particularly of the management of those structural conditions and the effectiveness of responses to conditions of crisis and early warning at continental and regional levels.

The deteriorating security situation in Africa makes the AU and its standing decision-making organ, the PSC, more critical than ever. With rising global geopolitical tensions and a weakened multilateral system, the effective functioning of the AU and its PSC is now a strategic imperative. However, the AU's current performance falls short of its past achievements, with the PSC struggling to maintain its core functions and losing credibility. On its part the AU and its bureaucracy failing to effectively follow up and implement existing decisions and policies that could have contributed to ameliorating the dire security situation.

As discussed in the preceding section, this reality necessitates fundamental rethinking in terms of both identifying strategic areas of intervention and in the AU's approach to existing and emerging conflicts or threats to peace and security on the continent. Beyond and above those highlighted in the preceding section, other measures that are worth considering for making progress in the noble objective of STGs include the following:

- Foregrounding political solutions as the primary means of silencing the guns and thus addressing the governance and institutional fragilities and weaknesses that create the conditions both for the expansion of the terrorist threat on the continent and the eruption of violent conflicts;

- Promotion of peace and civic education and political discourse and debate that emphasizes inclusion and protection of the interest of all rather than that which weaponizes identity and propagate division and hate which necessitates the expansion of the civic space for the full and free functioning of civil society organizations;
- The mainstreaming of human rights and the inclusion of women and youth in all peace processes across the conflict continuum from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction and development and transitional justice; and
- Prioritize investment in addressing the weakness or absence of and expanding mechanisms for non-violent means of resolving disputes including mediation, dialogue, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, judicial means, political negotiations at the national level.
- Adoption of a comprehensive continental legal and institutional regime (treaty) on the regulation of the importation into Africa and the curbing of the illicit circulation of arms and weapons on the African continent;
- Identifying and deploying tailor made policy and institutional interventions in countries with the most concentration and circulation of small arms and light weapons;
- Designing and deploying the kind of conflict management and resolution instrument tailored to the specificities of each conflict at a level and time that guarantees higher degree of success for resolution under conditions that present either incentives for opting for ending conflicts or higher costs for continuing with the use of guns;
- Proactive conflict prevention measures based on mapping situations that exhibit risks of violent conflicts and the use of guns and initiate timely policy intervention to prevent such risks from materializing;
- Initiating measures of reform to address the democratic governance deficit that has increased over the years, the increasing economic woes affecting increasing number of countries and peoples on the continent and the rupture in the social contract between state and society that is the underlying condition for the emergence of various forms of insecurities, instability and conflicts;
- The implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the AU human rights and governance institutions including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Peer Review Mechanisms as a basis for institutionalization in all states of inclusive systems of governance that guarantees protection of the interests and rights of all sections of society;
- Develop a strategy on negotiation and dialogue for peace in conflict situations involving terrorist groups. This strategy helps in providing guidance on how to pursue negotiation and dialogue with terrorist groups having regard to the delicate issue of de-radicalization, accountability for and reconciliation with affected member of communities. AU should also consider how some of the existing tools such as mediation unit could be leveraged by Member States while pursuing dialogue and reconciliation with terrorist groups.

- Foster greater collaboration between the AU and RECs/RMs in implementing integrated strategies that address both the immediate security concerns and long-term peacebuilding needs.
- Address the institutional setback that weakened the AU's Continental Early Warning System by restoring the dedicated division for conflict prevention and early warning.

ANNEX I

Assembly Decisions				
No.	Date	Decisions	Topic of Discussion	Major Outcomes
1	February 2023	Assembly/AU/Dec.843(XXXVI)	Decision on the report of the peace and security council (PSC) on the implementation of the au master roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa	<p>Underscored that ensuring adequate, flexible, sustainable and predictable financing of the AU peace and security activities remains the main challenge facing the AU, RECs/RMs and Member States in achieving the silencing the guns objectives;</p> <p>Welcomed the appointment by the Chairperson of the Commission of H.E Mohamed Ibn Chambas, of Ghana, as the new High Representative for silencing the guns;</p> <p>Directed the AU Commission and RECs/RMs, under the leadership of the PSC, to intensify support to Member States in their efforts to domesticate and implement the AUMR in its five key dimensions;</p> <p>Called for Member States and RECs/RMs to report on their actions and activities to silence the guns in the relevant dimensions within the five aspects of the AUMR for experience sharing and cross-learning to address the security challenges squarely</p> <p>Welcomed the establishment of an AU-RECs/RMs Steering Committee on silencing the guns as a platform for coordinating, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of the AUMR, as well as to support Member States in the domestication of the Silencing the Guns Agenda, in line with the relevant AU Instruments and Policy Organs' decisions;</p>

2	Feb 2022	Assembly/AU/Dec. 815(XXXV)	Decision on the report on the activities of the peace and security council (PSC) and the state of peace and security in Africa	<p>Welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2030, including the adoption of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanism, which spells out modalities, actions, stakeholders, and reporting timeframes to trace the implementation of all aspects of the Master Roadmap</p> <p>Urged Member States and the RECs/RMs, as well as all other relevant key stakeholders to effectively use the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism as a guiding tool for monitoring the implementation of the Master Roadmap and reporting on progress</p>
3	February 2020	Assembly/AU/Dec.754(XXXIII) Annex	Declaration on the 12 th ordinary meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS)	<p>In respect of the AU flagship project on “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” and implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap (AUMR) of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa, the timeframe for its full implementation should be extended to give additional time...</p> <p>This extension should be informed by a review of what has been done on this issue thus far.</p>
4	February 2019	Assembly/AU/Dec.719(XXXII)	Decision on the Fourth Report of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2020	<p>Tribute to the AU Commission, in particular the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra for his tireless efforts towards stability and reconciliation in Madagascar.</p> <p>Commended Equatorial Guinea for having tabled a draft resolution on Silencing the Guns by 2020, and CALLS ON all the A3 and the African Group in New York to work together, with a view to facilitating the adoption of this landmark resolution.</p> <p>Commended those countries which undertook activities in observance of the Africa Amnesty Month, namely, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Mali, Sudan and Zambia for their commitments towards the goal of silencing the guns in Africa, the Assembly urged all other Member States to emulate these efforts and give more visibility to the Africa Amnesty Month, September each year.</p>

5	July 2018	Assembly/AU/Dec.696(XXXI)	Decision on the Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by year 2020 - Doc. Assembly/AU/8(XXXI)	<p>The Assembly Commended the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Silencing the Guns Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, for building consensus between the Malagasy parties that resulted in the designation of the Prime Minister and the formation of Government of national consensus.</p> <p>Endorsed the efforts of the PSC for initiating the development of the draft resolution on Silencing the Guns in Africa and for the steps that it has taken, particularly those aimed at having it adopted on by the UN Security Council;</p>
6	January 2018	Assembly/AU/Dec.678(XXX)	Decision on the Second Report of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020	<p>Encouraged the RECs/RMs to fully mainstream implementation of the AU Master Roadmap in their activities, including setting dedicated focal points, and/or special envoys on silencing the guns, with a view to enhancing coordination of efforts with the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns;</p> <p>Welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, by the Chairperson of the Commission as the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, and</p> <p>Called upon Member States, the RECs/RMs, the UN and all partners, to extend their cooperation and support his activities in assisting Africa and its people to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020</p>
7	July 2017	Assembly/AU/Dec.645(XXIX)	Decision on the Inaugural Report of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020	<p>Encouraged AU Member States to speed up signing and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty adopted the UN General Assembly on 2 April 2013, which has the potential to play an important role in silencing the guns in Africa;</p> <p>Declared the month of September, of each year till 2020, as “Africa Amnesty Month” for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons/arms, in line with the African and international best practices.</p>

8	Feb 2017	Assembly/AU/ Dec.755(XXXIII)	Decision on the fifth report of the peace and security council of the African union on the implementation of the African Union master roadmap of practical steps for silencing the guns in Africa by the year 2020	Welcomed the AU Theme of the Year 2020 “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”
9	June 2015	Assembly/AU/ Decl.1(XXV)	Declaration on 2015 year of women’s empowerment and development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063	Commitment to develop and implement a Plan of Action towards Silencing the Guns by 2020 for promoting women’s participation in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict rebuilding;

ANNEX II

Peace and Security Council Decisions/Statements				
No.	Date	Session	Topic of Discussion	Major Outcomes
1	11 June 2022	930th Meeting – Communique	Commemoration of the African Border Day within the framework of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020,	<p>Commended the contributions of the AUBP to the AU's overall response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, among others, by assisting Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) in their efforts to fight the pandemic through cross-border cooperation and the stabilization of border areas.</p> <p>Underscored the importance for Member States to develop and implement national border governance strategies, in line with the AU Strategy on Better Integrated Border Governance and to further strengthen national structures responsible for border issues and, in this context, requested the AU Commission to continue providing technical support and to sensitise Member States on the importance of developing national border policies in line with the recommendations of the AU Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance.</p>

2	2 June 2020	929th Meeting – Communiqué	On the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian truce in Africa within the framework of the AU Roadmap for Silencing the guns in the context of COVID-19,	<p>Condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrorist attacks on the Continent, particularly the recent attacks in Chad, Nigeria and Somalia, as well as in northern Mozambique, which negatively impacts on the national COVID-19 response efforts;</p> <p>Welcomed the readiness expressed by the two warring sides, namely, the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), to return to the negotiating table within the framework of 5+5 Joint Military Commission as proposed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for a lasting humanitarian truce in this country; and</p> <p>Underlined the need for Member States to effectively address root causes of violent conflicts and disruptive crises, including governance deficits, inter-community tensions, marginalization of sections of society, lack of transparency, unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment; and the need for building strong democratic institutions that respond to the needs of the citizens by promoting and consolidating good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as socio-economic development.</p>
3	17 June 2021	1004th meeting – Communiqué	Retreat of the PSC on the Review of its Working Methods in the Context of the AU Institutional Reforms and the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2030,	<p>Adopted the Conclusions of the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by Year 2030.</p>

4	3 September 2020	943rd Meeting - Communiqué	On the Africa Amnesty Month: Implementation of the AU Theme of the year 2020 “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”	<p>Encouraged Member States to enact or update laws regulating civilian possession of arms/weapons, as well as further strengthening, or establishing, effective national institutions responsible for marking and registration of civilian- owned weapons;</p> <p>Requested the AUC to prepare and submit to the Member States tables to be completed on actions to be taken in relation to small arms and light weapons recovered and consolidate the information collected into a comprehensive report, as the contribution of the PSC to the Report on “Silencing the Guns in Africa” to be submitted to the Assembly in January/February 2021”; in this regard, recommends to the Assembly of the Union to extend the conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month, within the context of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063 (2013-2023), in which silencing the guns project is included; and</p> <p>Also requested the Commission to conduct a lessons-learned study, that covers the experiences of the conduct and commemoration of the Africa Amnesty Month, implementation of various national programs that were implemented outside the Amnesty Month, and submit to the PSC in the course of 2020, for its consideration.</p>
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5	2 June 2020	929th Meeting – Communique	On the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian truce in Africa within the framework of the AU Roadmap for Silencing the guns in the context of COVID-19,	<p>Condemned, in the strongest terms, the terrorist attacks on the Continent, particularly the recent attacks in Chad, Nigeria and Somalia, as well as in northern Mozambique, which negatively impacts on the national COVID-19 response efforts;</p> <p>Welcomed the readiness expressed by the two warring sides, namely, the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), to return to the negotiating table within the framework of 5+5 Joint Military Commission as proposed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for a lasting humanitarian truce in this country; and</p> <p>Underlined the need for Member States to effectively address root causes of violent conflicts and disruptive crises, including governance deficits, inter-community tensions, marginalization of sections of society, lack of transparency, unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment; and the need for building strong democratic institutions that respond to the needs of the citizens by promoting and consolidating good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as socio-economic development.</p>
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6	3 September 2020	943rd Meeting - Communiqué	On the Africa Amnesty Month: Implementation of the AU Theme of the year 2020 “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”	<p>Encouraged Member States to enact or update laws regulating civilian possession of arms/weapons, as well as further strengthening, or establishing, effective national institutions responsible for marking and registration of civilian-owned weapons;</p> <p>Requested the AUC to prepare and submit to the Member States tables to be completed on actions to be taken in relation to small arms and light weapons recovered and consolidate the information collected into a comprehensive report, as the contribution of the PSC to the Report on “Silencing the Guns in Africa” to be submitted to the Assembly in January/February 2021”; in this regard, recommends to the Assembly of the Union to extend the conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month, within the context of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063 (2013-2023), in which silencing the guns project is included; and</p> <p>Also requested the Commission to conduct a lessons-learned study, that covers the experiences of the conduct and commemoration of the Africa Amnesty Month, implementation of various national programs that were implemented outside the Amnesty Month, and submit to the PSC in the course of 2020, for its consideration.</p>
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7	14 March 2019	832nd Meeting – Communique	A briefing from the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) on the Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Its Impact on Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and adopted the following decision:	<p>Requested the Commission to establish a platform that will serve as a forum for sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices, as well as cross border cooperation on effective management and control of small arms and light weapons across the continent with the support of the RECs/RMs. Council also requests the Commission to establish a credible mechanism for measuring and reporting on progress of implementation of the STG Plan of Action, working closely with RECs, RMs, and regional bodies with a small arms mandate, especially those with technical expertise such as RECSA and ICGLR, as well as with Member States;</p> <p>Council requested the Commission, through the AU Border Programme, to provide necessary technical assistance to Member States; and</p> <p>Looks forward to receiving, as soon as possible, for consideration by Council, the Report on Mapping Illicit Arms Flows in Africa, developed jointly by the Commission and the Small Arms Survey, and validated by RECs, and international experts in late 2018.</p>
8	26 February 2019	829th Meeting – Press Statement	On the draft resolution on silencing the guns in Africa, to be considered by the United Nations Security Council.	<p>The PSC praised the A3's efforts, led by Equatorial Guinea, for organizing an open meeting to discuss the draft resolution on silencing guns in Africa;</p> <p>The PSC also welcomed the draft resolution and showed their full support for its adoption, emphasizing how it will help enhance the continent's efforts to achieve the AU Agenda 2063's goal of silencing guns in Africa;</p>

9	5 February 2019	824th Meeting - Press statement	Exchanged of views with the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, H.E. Ramtane Lamamra	<p>Council requested the Commission to expedite the finalization of the Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism of the Master Roadmap and urgently submit it to Council for its consideration and action as may be appropriate; and</p> <p>Council reiterated the need for effective use of all available tools for conflict prevention, including the Panel of the Wise, Panwise and Femwise. In the same context, Council encouraged all Member States to fully embrace the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), with a view to ensuring its universal application.</p>
10	7 August 2018	788th Meeting - Press Statement	The preparations for the Africa Amnesty Month within the context of the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.	Council, in line with the provision of the Assembly decision on the Africa Amnesty Month, called on Member States to communicate to the AU Commission on their efforts in implementing the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, once a year, after the Africa Amnesty Month and before the AU January Summit, in order to facilitate continuous assessment of its implementation, as well as sharing information and experience.

11	14 June 2017	693rd Meeting – Press Statement	Open Session on the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020.	<p>Council agreed that the AU Commission should collect inputs from all AU Member States and submit to Council, on their efforts of implementing the AU Master Roadmap, in order to facilitate the assessment/review of its implementation;</p> <p>Council agreed to recommend to the 29th Ordinary Assembly of the Union declaration of the African Day, 25 May, as an Amnesty Day for surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons/arms to designated national law enforcement agencies; and</p> <p>Council further agreed to recommend to the 29th Ordinary Assembly of the Union to appoint a Panel of the Eminent Personalities on Silencing the Guns, to monitor and report to the Peace and Security Council on implementation of the AU Master Roadmap and report to Council on the status its implementation, challenges and recommendations on the way forward.</p>
12	16 January 2017	648th meeting – Communiqué	The Draft African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020	<p>Decided to formally adopt the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. Council further decides to submit the Master Roadmap to the AU Assembly of Heads of States and Government during its 28th Ordinary Session to be held from 30 to 31 January 2017, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for endorsement; and</p> <p>Agreed to submit regular progress reports to future ordinary sessions of the Assembly of the Union, on the status of implementation of the Master Roadmap.</p>

13	24 April 2014	430th meeting – Press statement	“Silencing the Guns: Pre-requisites for Realising a Conflict-Free Africa by the Year 2020”.	<p>Participants and Council emphasized the obligations of individuals and non-state actors to uphold the culture of peace and tolerance, as well as to refrain from actions that undermine peace and stability on the continent;</p> <p>The importance of good governance, respect for human rights, popular participation and inclusivity was recognized. In this regard, there was a strong call for AU Member States to deepen the culture of democracy, accountability and good governance on the continent;</p> <p>Council requested the Commission to undertake a comprehensive study on the flow of illicit weapons into and within Africa and submit to it the outcome of such a study; and</p> <p>Council agreed on the urgent need for the elaboration of a Roadmap, to be submitted, for consideration by the Assembly, to underpin the actions necessary for the attainment of the goal of a conflict-free Africa by 2020 and Council requested the Commission to prepare the elements of a Roadmap for its consideration.</p>
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MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

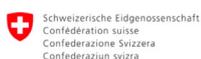
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research, training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

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ADDRESS

On the Corner of Equatorial Guinea St. and ECA Road, Zequala Complex,
7th Floor, Addis Ababa
Tel: +251118678809
Mobile: +251944723204 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia