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KOFI ANNAN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TRAINING CENTRE

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Charting a New Path? Resolution 2719 and the Future of African-led Peace Operations.

[Naila Salihu and Emma Birikorang]

Summary

This policy brief explores the prospects and challenges in the operationalisation of Resolution 2719. Authors suggest the following recommendations:

1. **The memorandum of understanding between the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should be revised to incorporate the provisions of Resolution 2719.**
2. **The AU and the RECs in seeking to access United Nations (UN) assessed contributions have significant work to do to streamline their operations to comply with UN requirements.**
3. **The AU should include the RECs in the engagement with the UN on modalities for accessing the funds. Bringing the RECs into the picture enhances cooperation, inclusivity and confidence-building.**
4. **RECs should take advantage of the provisions of 2719 to forge a closer relationship with the AU and be more open to cooperation with the AU in peace and security interventions in their member states.**

Introduction

On 21 December 2023, a landmark Resolution 2719 on the financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) was passed by the UN Security Council. The adoption of this Resolution is a major boost to the role of regional organisations in peace operations. Additionally, it brings normative and multilateral policies, and rules to bear on all AU-led missions hoping to reap the benefits of UN assessed contributions.¹ Resolution 2719, among other provisions, emphasises that AU PSOs will be 'under the direct, and effective command and control of the African Union'.² It also specifies detailed procedures for decision-making and authorisation, including consultations, joint strategic assessments, and clear mandates. It also establishes financial arrangements with detailed provisions on compliance with UN financial regulations, reimbursement frameworks, and the use of assessed contributions. While the African position had pushed

for 100% funding, the resolution provides a hybrid approach to funding arrangement with 75 per cent from assessed contributions and the rest mobilised jointly by the AU and UN from the international community.³ On human rights, resolution 2719 specifies compliance frameworks in detail, highlighting the operational necessity for AU-led PSOs to adhere to international law and other compliance frameworks, including human rights and humanitarian law.⁴

Adopting this resolution in response to the AU's longstanding request will undoubtedly shape the future of the UN-AU partnership in peace operations generally. However, difficult questions lie ahead on the operationalisation of the resolution especially when specific cases are presented for Security Council authorisation and support.⁵ Questions have also arisen about whether it will be used to supplement existing

¹Amani Africa (2024). AU's take on UN Security Council Resolution 2719 on the financing of PSOs, March 1. Available at <https://amaniafrica-et.org/aus-take-on-un-security-council-resolution-2719-on-financing-of-psos/>

²UN Security Council (2023). Resolution 2719 (2023), Adopted by the Security Council at its 9518th meeting, on 21 December 2023.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Security Council, Report (2024). In Hindsight: The Financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations: Assessing Council Dynamics and Anticipating Future Action. February.



During the passing of the Resolution 2719 at the UN Security Council
Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

PSOs, or if the AU will use the opportunity to create a new mission.⁶ This policy brief explores the prospects and challenges in the operationalisation of Resolution 2719. Specifically, it interrogates the applicability of this important resolution to peace operations being carried out by Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and *ad hoc* coalitions. We argue that the resolution's implementation could be hindered by uncertainties including whether it applies to PSOs run by sub-regional organisations and *ad hoc* coalitions. It also interrogates how the AU and the RECs will cooperate to reduce the burden of peace operations on their member states.

Prospects

Increasingly, there has been a decline in UN peacekeeping in Africa and a shift towards African-led operations.⁷ African-led PSOs have become avenues for demonstrating a more local, context-specific response to insecurity and a desire from member states to turn to more self-help options.⁸ While African-led missions have had a degree of success in addressing Africa's armed conflicts, they often face multiple challenges including a lack of resources, expeditionary capabilities, and civilian infrastructure typical of UN peacekeeping.⁹ Resolution 2719 has the potential to make peace operations more effective and financially sustainable while enhancing African leadership in managing them.

The AU PSO doctrine includes missions that are not only mandated by the AU but also those that the AU has authorised, endorsed, and recognised. As noted earlier, questions have arisen on the applicability of Resolution 2719 to PSOs by RECs. Regional organisations are recognised as the building blocks of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The relationship of subsidiarity, complementarity, and comparative advantage between the AU and the RECs has been established in the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council, which constitutes the legal framework of the APSA.¹⁰ The subsidiarity principle requires RECs to complement the role of the AU. It entails three elements: a decision-making mechanism, the division

⁶Institute for Security Studies (2024). Will Resolution 2719 be a game-changer for ATMIS? PSC Report, June 06. Available at <https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/will-resolution-2719-be-a-game-changer-for-atmis>.

⁷Allen, N. (2023). African-Led Peace Operations: A Crucial Tool for Peace and Security. August 9. Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

⁸Tchie, A. (2023). African-Led Peace Support Operations in a Declining period of New UN Peacekeeping Operations', *Global Governance* 29, 2023, pp.230–244.

⁹Allen, N. & Mazurova, N. (2024). African Union and United Nations Partnership Key to the Future of Peace Operations in Africa. April 30. Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

¹⁰African Union, (2002). *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of Peace and Security Council of African Union*, Addis Ababa: African Union,

of labour and burden sharing.¹¹ However, what subsidiarity entails in practice remains unclear and contested leading to confusion and even policy paralysis in dealing with specific conflict situations.¹² For example, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a subsidiary of the AU, yet its comparative advantage in West Africa and proactive stance on conflicts, as well as its internal organisation and institution capacity, may often be ahead of similar processes within the AU. ECOWAS, based on its cumulative experiences in peace operations appears more agile and is quicker to deploy peace operations than the AU. Historically, ECOWAS often takes the lead in establishing peace operations and such operations subsequently get endorsed by the AU and even the UN.

Challenges

There have long been calls for stronger partnerships and coordination between the African Union (AU) and RECs. Notably, the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the AU, RECs and the coordinating mechanisms of regional standby brigades in 2008, sought to provide a framework for enhancing cooperation and coordination. However, there have been challenges. One issue that often comes up is that RECs do not consult the AU Peace Support Council (PSC) before launching peace operations. RECs mainly seek the AU PSC's endorsement to access financial and logistical support from the AU and UN.¹³

Resolution 2719 does not make explicit provision of funding for peace operations by RECs. It, however, recognises that cooperation with regional and sub-regional organisations in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security can improve collective security.¹⁴ It is therefore believed that peace operations undertaken by sub-regional organisations could potentially be eligible for funding through the framework of resolution 2719 if they are authorised by AU through a consultative UN-AU planning and decision-making process and if they are undertaken in line with the compliance mechanisms enumerated in the resolution.¹⁵ This creates incentives for sub-regional configurations to work through the AU and possibly contribute to enhancing cooperation and stronger partnerships between the AU and RECs. There is a need for the AU and RECs to clarify their division of labour and further standardise, institutionalise, and streamline their processes for mandating and coordinating the deployment of missions.¹⁶

Beyond the tenuous relationship between the AU and RECs, there has been the emergence of *ad hoc* coalitions as manifested by G5 Sahel, an initiative among Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger to foster economic cooperation and tackle threats posed by militant Islamist groups in the Sahel region. Even before the G5 Sahel, Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Benin adopted a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to fight Boko Haram. The Accra Initiative was launched in 2017 by Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Mali and Niger to curb violent extremism in member states. Some of these coalitions undertake peace operations and other counter-terrorism operations in member states. *Ad hoc* coalitions are designed to address specific security concerns, dependent on reaching political agreement among participating member nations, and have emerged as more flexible and agile alternatives to traditional peacekeeping.¹⁷ These initiatives despite their limitations have become more adaptive and nimble in dealing with recurrent security challenges.¹⁸ What are the prospects for supporting such mechanisms within the framework of Resolution 2719? RECs and various *ad hoc* coalitions are taking the lead in new intervention strategies and will therefore require consideration for funding under resolution 2719 to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. Since Resolution 2719 recognises only peace operations led by the AU, it provides avenues for RECs and *ad hoc* coalitions to work through the AU. It is therefore important that the relationship between the AU,

¹¹Ndiaye, M. (2016). The relationship between the AU and the RECs/RMs on peace and security in Africa: subsidiarity and inevitable common destiny. In: Cedric de Coning, Linnéa Gelot and John Karlsrud (Eds.). *The future of African Peace Operations: From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram*. Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, pp.51-64.

¹²Amani Africa (2023). Beyond Subsidiarity: Understanding the roles of AU and RECs/RM in peace and security. Report No. 16, August.

¹³Tadesse, B. & Russo, J. (2024). UN Support to African Union–Led Peace Support Operations: What Next for Resolution 2719? " International Peace Institute, September.

¹⁴UN Security Council (2023). Resolution 2719 (2023).

¹⁵Chen, E. (2023). Next Steps on the Financing of African Peace Support Operations: Unpacking Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023), February, New York: Center on International Cooperation.

¹⁶Tadesse and Russo (2024). Op. cit.

¹⁷Albrecht, P., Emmerik, V.C., Aning, K., Wilén, N., Karlsrud, J., Fisher, J., Henry, M., Tchier, A.(2024). Reimagining Peacekeeping in Africa and Beyond, *DIIS Policy Brief*, May.

¹⁸Birikorang, E. & Abdallah, M.(2023). The Accra Initiative: An Old Wine in a New Bottle? *Occasional Paper 51*, Accra: KAIPTC.

the RECs, and emerging formations become more strategic, streamlined, and focused.

Conclusion

African-led peace operations have emerged as a more practicable and quicker alternative to dealing with peace and security challenges. AU, RECs and *ad hoc* coalitions have been instrumental in this regard despite their limitations including inadequate and unpredictable financing arrangements. Resolution 2719 is a welcoming development to enhance the financial sustainability and effectiveness of the AU-led peace operations. Apart from the AU, RECs and *ad hoc* coalitions have been instrumental in deploying operations to deal with security challenges in their respective regions. Resolution 2719 provides opportunities for stronger partnerships among the UN, AU and RECs in peace operations. However, the effectiveness of this resolution ultimately depends on its implementation and practical applicability to peace operations by RECs and *ad hoc* coalitions.

Recommendations

1. The memorandum of understanding between the AU and the RECs should be revised to incorporate the provisions of Resolution 2719.
2. The AU and the RECs in seeking to access UN-assessed contributions have significant work to do to streamline their operations to comply with UN requirements
3. The AU should include the RECs in the engagement with the UN on modalities for accessing the funds. Bringing the RECs into the picture enhances cooperation, inclusivity and confidence-building
4. RECs should take advantage of the provisions of 2719 to forge a closer relationship with the AU and be more open to cooperation with the AU in peace and security interventions in their member states.

About the Authors

Naila Salihu is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research (FAAR) at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). She holds a Ph.D. in Defence and Security from Cranfield University, U.K. Her research interests include peacebuilding, defence and security sector governance in Africa, military-societal relations, and democratic processes in Africa.

Emma Birikorang is the Acting Director of the Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research (FAAR) of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). Her recent research focuses on African Peace and Security Mechanisms and ECOWAS/AU regional peacekeeping frameworks. Her research interests are gendered dimension of violent extremism and terrorism, the democratic reversal in African countries and peacekeeping transitions.

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Norwegian Embassy

Accra

KOFI ANNAN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TRAINING CENTRE
 PMB CT 210, CANTONMENTS, ACCRA-GHANA | T: 233(0)302718200 | F: 233 (0)302718201

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