

ABOUT THE PROJECT

African Politics, African Peace charts an agenda for peace in Africa, focusing on how the African Union can implement its norms and use its instruments to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. It is an independent report of the World Peace Foundation, supported by the African Union.

The Report is the most extensive review of the African Union's peace missions ever conducted. It is based on detailed case studies and cross-cutting research, and draws on consultations with leading experts, peacekeepers, and mediators.

This Paper is a summary of research undertaken in support of the Project.

WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION

The World Peace Foundation, an operating foundation affiliated solely with The Fletcher School at Tufts University, aims to provide intellectual leadership on issues of peace, justice and security. We believe that innovative research and teaching are critical to the challenges of making peace around the world, and should go hand-in-hand with advocacy and practical engagement with the toughest issues. To respond to organized violence today, we not only need new instruments and tools- we need a new vision of peace. Our challenge is to reinvent peace.

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Bottom-Up or Top-Down?

The Need for a Relevant, 'Grounded' and Distinguishing Peace Operations Doctrine for the African Standby Force (ASF)

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Introduction and Policy Recommendations:

The African Standby Force (ASF) is an international, continental, multidisciplinary peacekeeping force that serves as one of the five components of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) of the African Union. It acts under the direction of the AU and is deployed to respond to African crises and conflicts. This paper examines the development of common doctrine and guidance to support the operations of the ASF. It explains the role of doctrine in multinational peace-support operations (PSOs), reviews the doctrinal experiences of some African troop contributing countries (TCCs), analyses the role of multinational, regional and national organizations in supporting doctrinal development, and concludes with a case study of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It suggests that:

- (a) A realistic common doctrine for ASF-led 'peace operations' ought to be developed. This doctrine should recognize emerging trends that affect crises and conflicts in Africa, and reflect the experiences of African peace operations to date.
- (b) Doctrine development should be facilitated through increased institutional capacity. First, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) should encourage and support its members in developing the capacity and culture of doctrine development at the national level; second, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should be encouraged to revise existing and develop new peace operations doctrine,

and finally, the capacities of the AU Peace and Security Department (PSOD) and the planning elements (PLANELM) hosted by each REC and the PSOD should be bolstered.

(c) Efforts should be made to harmonise approaches to training for peace operations at the regional level; these will support both ‘UN Peacekeeping’ and ‘ASF Peace Operations’.

Key Findings:

Military doctrine refers to a common, non-prescriptive framework for understanding approaches to military operations, and should serve as the basis for the training and education for troops. Moreover, doctrine should inform the further development of more detailed and specific tactics, techniques and procedures for the conduct of a wide range of military tasks.

In the context of the AU, doctrine needs to be grounded and reflect the actual capabilities of the AU, not what it aspires to do. The availability of AU doctrine depends on the strength of the institution as well as the various constitutive mechanisms or bodies which feed into the creation of doctrine, and consequentially, the uneven development of military doctrine for the ASF is constrained by a lack of capacity and coordination. Further, doctrinal development continues to be embedded in colonial military frameworks, or borrowed from those countries which have elaborated more ‘seasoned’ approaches.

The ASF comprises of five brigades, with each African sub-region required to host a brigade, supported by brigade headquarters and a PLANELM. This arrangement requires the harmonisation between the RECs and the AU, and planning takes place through the coordination of the regional PLANELMS, and the PSOD PLANELM. An ASF doctrine for peace support operations was developed in 2007, but remains relatively unused due to (a) its divergence from recent AU operational experience, (b) the pressure from

TCCs to conform to UN doctrine (that is, aimed at making them eligible for UN operations), and (c) simple practicalities regarding the document’s dissemination and readability.

Despite this, the AU PSOD has developed a repository of military guidance and doctrine notes, which remain available to different brigades and for training purposes. Unfortunately, this doctrinal architecture lacks a common conceptual foundation, and remains largely borrowed from external sources. There is a difference between the circumstances in which the AU and UN are constitutionally able to mandate military interventions (the AU is more permissive), and therefore, there is a need for common ASF doctrine which is not only informed by the different type of peace operations experienced to date, but which also reflects the more offensive enforcement operations which are supported by the AU’s legal framework.

Regional and national efforts to develop doctrine have proceeded unevenly. Some REC’s (namely ECOWAS and EASF) and some countries (Ethiopia, Rwanda and South Africa) have made greater progress on developing common doctrine than others, albeit following different developmental models. Further, the problems caused by a lack of common doctrine are easily observable in the field: as part of AMISOM, Ethiopian and Djiboutian troops have found it difficult to carry out joint operations, pursue targets together, and have engaged very differently with local populations and groups.

There is a need for a common doctrine to support the ASF’s contribution to future African PSOs. Whilst RECS are beginning to take forward efforts to both revise and develop PSO doctrine, these regional efforts must still coherently support an overall ASF ‘concept’. The contributions of western expertise for initiating these processes, and the contributions made by UN Guidance which considers the UN’s African experience remain important but doctrine for wider African peace operations needs to be based on an understanding of African operational experiences.

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