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African Union as a Platform of African Conflict Management

Africká unie jako platforma pro management afrických konfliktů

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Abstract

The article focuses on assessing the ability of the African Union to perform the policy, peacekeeping and peacemaking roles within its conflict management doctrine and it also discusses whether African security problems may be more easily solved by the AU as an organization with a continental profile or by some other African organization on lower level. According to authors, the AU suffers from similar deficits as local regional organizations, which considerably restrict its efficiency and make the gap between AU's security mandate and the sources for its achievement, but it manages to perform the conflict management activities to a far greater degree than any other African organization at a much lower level has ever managed. With regard to that, the authors suggest an ideal profile of an actor capable of solving Africa's security problems in the form of the AU and its African Peace and Security Architecture representing a platform of equal cooperation of the Union with regional organizations and combining the advantages of both of these actors' approach towards conflict management.

Abstrakt

Článek se zabývá posouzením schopností Africké unie vykonávat politickou, peacekeepingovou a peacemakingovou roli v rámci její doktríny managementu konfliktů a také zkoumá, zda by africké bezpečnostní problémy mohly být lépe řešeny AU jakožto organizací s kontinentálním profilem či některou z jiných afrických organizací nižších úrovní. Dle autorů AU sice trpí stejnými nedostatky jako lokální regionální organizace, což značně omezuje její efektivitu a vytváří propast mezi jejím bezpečnostním mandátem a zdroji k jeho dosažení, ale podařilo se jí vykonávat aktivity managementu konfliktů v daleko větší míře než jakékoliv jiné africké organizaci. S ohledem na to autoři navrhují ideální profil aktéra schopného řešit africké bezpečnostní problémy v podobě Africké unie a její Africké mírové a bezpečnostní architektury reprezentující platformu rovnocenné spolupráce unie s regionálními organizacemi a kombinující výhody přístupů obou těchto aktérů k managementu konfliktů.

Klíčová slova

Africká unie; Africká bezpečnostní a mírová architektura, management konfliktů; bezpečnost.

Keywords

African Union; African Peace and Security Architecture; conflict management; security.

INTRODUCTION

Attributing a certain security role to regional organizations is quite a new issue in the African context. The regional dimension of conflict management remained rather undeveloped in the African conditions during the Cold War. This situation had not been changed until the later stages of the Cold War with the emergence of security activities of various subcontinental organisations (e.g. SADC - Southern African Development Community, ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States, IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development, etc.) and more intensively in the context of a broader international consensus about a greater role of regional organisations in maintaining the international order in the early 1990s. Ghali's Agenda for Peace in 1992 articulated a new cooperative relationship between the United Nations (UN) and regional formations in solving regional crises. Regional and subregional organizations started to be perceived as the first authorities to solve security problems overlapping the national borders. For this reason, the development of African regional organizations capable of solving security issues was strongly supported by the international community. However, the support of the development of regionalism was coming also from African states themselves. It originated in African aspirations to solve the continent's problems without external interventions according to the principle "African solutions to African problems".

The idea that the best way how to keep peace in Africa is that the Africans themselves should solve their continent's problems has been a common part of political debates at least over the past fifty years. In this period, it has received support from many sources, both African and Western. There are several factors explaining the resonance and popularity of this idea. Its origin can be found in the anticolonial fight, as it reflects a strong anti-imperialist sentiment, faith in African freedom to make free decisions about their future without outside dictates, ideas of a sovereign African personality, and the philosophical and ideological conception of Négritude. When advocating their approach, African supporters of African solutions emphasize also Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which in its Article 52 encourages regional organizations to settle the disputes in their own area peacefully. This approach was advocated during the 1990s as a necessary response to the considerable decline of interests of international actors in Africa after the end of the Cold War (with a short exception of Somalia). In some cases (e.g. Burundi or Liberia), the UN explicitly rejected local demands to carry out peacekeeping operations. The most visible loss of interest was the withdrawal from Rwanda during the genocide in 1994. *"If there is a common thread running throughout Africa, it is fading international attention. The outstanding feature of Western policy in Africa is its absence,"* concluded the International Institute of Strategic Studies in mid 1990s.[1] The obvious lesson for Africans was that they cannot wait for Western actions, but they needed to take the lead. The culmination of the development outlined above was the establishment of the African Union (AU), which declares its ambition to play an active role in the management of security issues of the continent.

Each of the African regional organizations and initiatives was established at a different time and in various circumstances, organizes different countries for a different purpose and has its own unique historical trajectory stemming from the link to the colonial period and its heritage. None of the local organizations is explicitly focused only on peacekeeping and security, yet all of them have these fields, directly or indirectly, on their agenda. However their collective evidence about their achievements in these fields is not much impressive since Africa is a continent struck by the greatest number of armed conflicts. It is evident that all of them suffer from minor deficits restricting the fulfilment of their roles in the area of peacekeeping and security. Amongst the most crucial ones, there are structural conditions in which these organizations must work; their often excessively ambitious goals; lack of financial, material and human capacity; in many regions also the absence of a hegemony that would be able to provide local organizations with a vision and become their leader; the dispute over the form and role of these organizations between their members and external donors and overlapping membership

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[1] INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES. *Strategic survey 1996/1997.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 223. ISBN 978-0198292968.

duplicating the effort of these organizations, loosening the activity of the member states and also affecting the degree of their commitment to individual organizations. There is still a lot of suspicion amongst African states. The only thing that really works on the continent is what the individual governments of the member states want to work. The regional structures as sovereign entities cannot do anything about it. A promise for the future is that the restricted efficiency of regional organizations is still better than their inactivity, as it at least carries along a certain process of learning that can result in their improvement.

Since 2002 we have witnessed increasing efforts to overcome the above mentioned restrictions of each organization by building a unifying platform called African peacekeeping and security architecture (APSA) that would connect institutions and mechanisms functioning at a continental, regional and national level. The national level is formed by member states of the African Union. Until the formation of the AU, the most active organizations in the security field in Africa were regional organizations. Nowadays, they form the regional level of the APSA. The African Union identifies as its major components eight regional economic communities (RECs) with a peacekeeping and security mandate: IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS, East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and further on the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Furthermore, the regional part of the APSA is completed with two more regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution: East African Standby Force (EASF) and North African Regional Capability (NARC).[2] The African Union coordinates the activities of the RECs in the area of peacekeeping and security via liaison officers from the REC operating within the AU Commission in Addis Ababa.

The APSA is still not in the condition to fully implement the agenda for which it was determined. Similarly, the African Union is a relatively young organization that is also still being formed. Despite that, as Williams pointed out[3], the AU has already fulfilled three roles in the area of conflict management - it has served as a political arena, peacekeeper and peacemaker. Our aim in this text is to take these roles as a framework for assessing the ability of the AU to perform these functions. We will also try to find an answer to a related question, whether African security problems may be more easily solved by the AU as a sovereign "regional" organization with a continental profile than by a territorially limited regional organizations.

ROLES OF THE AU IN THE AREA OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

AU as a political broker

African Union enabled its member states to interact and provided them with a space for a clash of their ideas and principles. This role was performed especially by the Peace and Security Council (PSC), a key organ of the AU for making decisions in the field of conflict management, in which member states discuss the regional security issues and how multinational and global norms interact with African conditions. Thanks to this function, the PSC fulfilled the mediation role between the Union's approach towards conflict management and external anticipations about the form of this approach (e.g. on the part of foreign governments, international organizations such as the European Union (EU) or UN, media or NGOs).

Among the important political factors affecting the capacity of AU conflict management, there is the actual setting of Union's goals in this area, unity of the PSC in their support (crucial for conducting peacekeeping operations, viable peace processes, just as the development of exit strategies), permanent

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[2] AFRICAN UNION. African Union Handbook 2014. A Guide For Those Working With And Within The African Union. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission and New Zealand Crown, 2014, p. 118. ISSN: 2350-3319.

[3] WILLIAMS, Paul D. *The African Union´s conflict management capabilities* [online]. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, October 2011 [cit. 2014-29-09]. Available from: http://i.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/IIGG_WorkingPaper7.pdf

political engagement of special AU ambassadors, commissions and panels, just as peacekeepers in the field and real cooperation with the authorities of the host state and other member states, which is important above all for the crucial planning and initial stages of each operation when generating the required forces. In all these points, the AU has a lot to catch up on. Above all, over the time of its operation, it has been possible to find in the PSC representatives from countries that were undergoing an armed conflict during their participation (e.g. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal or Burundi) and have little respect for constitutional government, the rule of law and human rights (e.g. Sudan until 2006, Zimbabwe until 2013). Even today we can still find Libya and Algeria as members of PSC that were re-elected in April 2014.[4] The persisting presence of authoritarian regimes in the council raises doubts about the depth of the AU's commitment to democratic principles and about its continental legitimacy in situations when it is supposed to express its views about the issues of peace, security and human rights. It is even more significant in the context of the PSC acting consensually and hence autocracies are fully involved in the decision-making.

The efficiency of the political dimension is also constrained by the Union's bureaucratic deficits. In order to conduct efficient peacekeeping and peacemaking initiatives, the AU needs efficient management and bureaucratic structures, both in Addis Ababa and in the field. Currently, some of its administrative workers do not have good reputation even among the member states. Especially in the few first years of its functioning, some of them complained about bureaucrats of the AU Commission having obtained all the power and playing the leading role in installing the PSC agenda and its time schedule, preparing the proposals of reports and joint press releases that they were allegedly providing the representatives only a short time before the negotiation over their approval itself.[5] Whether the AU Commission bureaucrats should initiate politics or merely simply implement instructions from member states remains a serious bone of contention between these groups and it is very likely the source of member states' reluctance to expand the administrative apparatus of the bodies of the AU dealing with the realm of peace and security.

Regarding the degree of the member states' commitment to the AU, one can also mention the issue of its financing, which represents one of the major challenges of this organization's efficiency. Out of the total 522.1 million USD forming this organization's budget for 2015, member states are planned to contribute only 131.5 million (25% of the budget), while the absolute majority of 374.8 million will be taken from external partners (72% of the budget) and the rest 15.8 million (3% of the budget) from the Reserves Fund, Acquisition of Properties Fund and Women's Fund, respectively.[6] Moreover, most of that part of the budget that is given by member states usually comes only from the so-called Big Five comprising South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Nigeria. It is expected, that for the 2015 budget these countries will contribute 65% of the member states' contribution. The disturbing question is what will happen if one of the Big Five countries stops paying, just as Libya did in 2011 and 2012? It is also interesting in this context that out of the total sum that was contributed to the budget by the member states in 2014, only 6.3 million USD went to the programmes of the African Union and the remaining

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[4] PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL. *List of the Members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (from 1 April 2014)* [online]. Addis Ababa, 2014, [cit. 2014-28-11]. Available from: http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/list-of-the-psc-2014.pdf

[5] BAH, Alhaji Sarjoh et al. *The African Peace and Security Architecture*. Addis Ababa: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014, pp. 38-45. and AFRICAN UNION. *Moving Africa forward: African peace and security architecture 2010 assessment study* [online]. Addis Ababa, 2013, p. 78 [cit. 2014-29-09]. Available from: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/RO%20African%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Architecture.pdf.

[6] ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION. Decision on the budget of the African Union for the 2015 financial year. In: AU. *Decisions, Declarations and Resolution* [online]. Malabo: Assembly of the Union Twenty-Third Ordinary Session, 26-27 June 2014, pp. 48-49 [cit. 2014-24-11]. Available from: http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Assembly%20AU%20Dec%20517%20-%20545%20%28XXIII%29%20_E.pdf

119.6 million USD (95% of a contribution) to operational costs.[7] It means that the expenses on the implementation of the programmes and agenda of Union's key institutions are financed primarily by external donors. These facts emphasise even more the African Union's dependence on external financing and the limited degree of commitment of a majority of its member states to this organization. If the willingness to spend money in favour of one's organization can be regarded as the indicator of seriousness, then a majority of African states do not take the AU very seriously.

Peacekeeping

The role of the African Union in the realm of peacekeeping was fulfilled via conducting quite a large number of complex peacekeeping operations. AU is facing similar structural obstacles as its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), but the reason for the higher peacekeeping activity of AU in this area is evident considering that the OAU only had the power to intervene in a conflict situation if it was invited by the disputing parties and intrastate conflicts were seen as a matter of the governments, since the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the member states was highly respected.[8]

From the African Union's peacekeeping activity expressed by its peacekeeping operations, four general conclusions can be deduced. The first of them is the fact that these operations were heavily dependent on the limited number of contributing African states; on the one hand, it means a very diverse level of support for peacekeeping across the continent, but on the other hand, it also reflects the preferences of member states concerning what organisations they will send their soldiers to. Despite the fact that the AU conducts its own peacekeeping activities, several African states, the most significant of which are Rwanda, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Benin, and Egypt, remain keen supporters of peacekeeping within the UN.[9] Similarly, it can be said that a majority of the AU peacekeeping operations could have never been conducted without the contributions of a small number of devoted African countries, including above all South Africa (crucial for the operations in Burundi, the Comoros, and Darfur), Rwanda, Nigeria and Senegal (altogether forming the military axis of the African Union Mission in Sudan /AMIS/ forces, while Nigeria was also one of the main contributors to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali /AFISMA/ that was incorporated to MINUSMA in July 2013), and Uganda (standing alone for nearly a year in the African Union Mission in Somalia /AMISOM/ before the arrival of Burundi troops). Ethiopia also provided a great number of its soldiers to the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and supported South Africa in the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB).[10] Regarding the fact that the entire AU has 54 members, the aforementioned reality of contributors to peacekeeping missions leaves a great space to expansion.

The second general conclusion is the persisting dependence of AU peacekeeping operations on non-African assistance coming especially from the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU. It is interesting to point out that this dependence undermines the key rhetoric principle of the Union's approach to conflict management, which is giving preference to African solutions (according to the well-known slogan "African solutions first"). Despite the considerable peacekeeping activity and big ambitions of AU to play a greater role in this area, its effectiveness is constrained by a mandate-

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[7] SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVE. *Budget of the African Union for the 2014 financial year* [online]. Pinelands: South African Foreign Policy Initiative, 2014 [cit. 2014-29-09]. Available from: http://www.safpi.org/news/article/2013/budget-african-union-2014-financial-year
[8] For more see KUWALI, Dan and VILJOEN, Frans. *Africa and the Responsibility to Protect: Article 4(h) of the African Union Constitutive Act*. New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 14-16.
[9] See WILLIAMS, ref. 3, pp. 15-16
[10] LOTZE, Walter. *Strengthening African Peace Support Operations: Nine Lessons for the Future of the ASF* [online]. Berlin: Centre for International Peace Operations, 2014, p. 2 [cit. 2014-24-11]. Available from: http://effectivepeacekeeping.org/sites/effectivepeacekeeping.org/files/12/ZIF_Strengthening%20African%20Peace%20Support%20Ops_Dec2013.pdf

resource gap, i.e. a discrepancy between *"PSC's willingness to authorize such missions and the AU's ability to implement them."[11]*

In the military dimension, African Union needs to strive for the provision of a greater number of soldiers and technology to be able to conduct independent complex peacekeeping operations. The most obvious example of its military unpreparedness was the situation at the initial stage of the AMISOM mission. The Burundi contingents lacked even the most elementary military equipment (which was eventually provided by the United States government) and they arrived in the theatre of operation approximately with a one-year delay as they had no logistic capacity for their transport. The same problem arose also in Nigeria and Ghana that offered their soldiers to this mission, but had no resources for their transport. Their backups thus never arrived.[12] In general, the AU lacks equipment to conduct operations in very demanding environments, such as Sudan, Somalia or Mali. It lacks helicopters, armed transporters, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), night vision devices, communication, intelligence and infrastructure (e.g. safe accommodation capacities, hospitals, logistic chain of supplies, and generally services in the rear) facilities, and as it was shown thanks to the Mogadishu experience, also battle tanks and a sophisticated radar system to detect mortar fire, which could further reduce the number of civilian casualties. Although identified as a part of the most recent AMISOM strategic concept, also the maritime component of this mission remains unfunded and ruefully inadequate. As Freear and Coning put it, it is very controversial with both the government of Somalia and especially African Union partners reluctant to embrace the idea that a maritime component is necessary.[13]

As regards the personnel aspect, the AU suffers from a lack of military and civilian specialists, including doctors, police officers, engineers, intelligence agents and experts to build up local capacity in the fields of justice and law. However, the Union's largest civilian deficit in conflict management is its lack of mediation capacity. Rather than trying to form its own systematic approach to mediation, the Union lately proceeded exclusively on the ad hoc basis. Instead of focusing its efforts on evaluating past mediation activities and making its own sophisticated system for mediation between the conflict actors, it hired prestigious personalities prominent in the African context to conduct them. Unfortunately, they often lacked relevant training and experience to fulfil this role and have created confusion and even exacerbated conflicts.[14] External donors, helping to fill in these human resources gaps, provide their assistance in the form of financing, material equipment and training directly to the contributing countries. Doing so, they actually harm the system of the AU by evading it.

The third conclusion of the AU's peacekeeping activity is the evident difficulty to reach the consensus of the member states on the mandate of peacekeeping operations, and this is so especially if the host state should be a PSC member or if the host state has an ally in the Council willing to support its position. In general, it is related to the issue of the degree of commitment of Union members to the idea of humanitarian intervention and in particular to Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the AU. Up until now, this article has never been invoked to justify military action against a member state, not even in cases in which the relevant international commissions actually identified committing crimes against humanity (e.g. Darfur in 2004 and 2005), or where the UN Security Council suspected that such crimes had occurred (e.g. in Libya or the Ivory Coast in 2011). According to Williams, this unwillingness or inability of the AU to invoke this article are explained by the following three factors: 1) strength of the potential host state, 2) residual power of the principle of non-intervention and anti-

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[11] AFRICAN UNION, ref. 5, p. 68

[12] HULL, Cecilia and SVENSSON, Emma. *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM): exemplifying African Union peacekeeping challenges*. Stockholm: FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2008, p. 8. ISSN 1650-1942.

[13] FREEAR, Matt and CONING, Cedric. Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for Peace Operations in Mali. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*. 2014, vol. 2, no. 23, p. 6. ISSN 2165-2627.

[14] LAURIE, Nathan. *Plan of Action to Build the African Union's Mediation Capacity*. New York: United Nations' Mediation Support Unit and the African Union's Conflict Management Division, 2009, pp. 14-15.

imperialism within African states, and 3) lack of military capacity to conduct humanitarian interventions (perhaps excluding those against small and weak states).[15]

The last fourth conclusion that can be reached about Union's peacekeeping operations is that they have always been constructed (perhaps with the exception of the mission on the Comoros) as temporary provisions counting on a prompt overtaking of the peacekeeping relay by the UN. To a certain degree, this approach represents the form of cooperation started in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which encourages regional formations to undertake the first steps in the peace resolution of local arguments.[16] The ability of the AU to promptly respond to crises on the continent is undoubtedly one of its advantages as a peacekeeping organization. Nevertheless, its reliance on a quick transfer of responsibility to the UN can only encourage it to become too ambitious and conduct operations in extreme conditions, without building up its own relevant security architecture and being able to take care of itself on a long-term basis.

Peacemaking

The peacekeeping missions of the AU can only reduce the worst symptoms of ongoing armed conflicts. The real test of the functionality of the APSA is whether the African Union can really solve violence that emerges from causes which may vary from economic, social, political or natural resource-related or a mixture of these and that have been restricting the development of the continent for decades. Hence the last, third role of the AU was implemented in the area of peacemaking. The Union's approach towards this activity reflects the preference of member states for private consensual decision-making, be it within the framework of the PSC or in negotiations with antagonized parties. For most of the post-Cold-War period, elite negotiating of power-sharing agreements predominated in the initiatives of conflict management. But due to the recurrent cases of recalcitrant behaviour, the PSC adopted a more coercive mechanism, sanction regimes, to ensure adherence to the set goals.

Based on the Article 7 of the Constitutive Act of the AU stating the power of the PSC *"to institute sanctions whenever an unconstitutional change of government takes place in a member state"*[17], the AU imposed sanctions (as of November 2014) on ten countries in twelve episodes: Central African Republic (March 2003 - June 2005; March 2013 - cont.), Togo (February 2005 - May 2005), Mauritania (August 2005 - April 2007; August 2008 - June 2009), Guinea-Conakry (December 2008 - December 2010), Niger (August 2009 - March 2011), Madagascar (March 2009 - cont.), Côte d'Ivoire (December 2010 - April 2011), Republic of Guinea-Bissau (April 2012 - cont.), Mali (March 2012 - October 2012), and Egypt (July 2013 - cont.).

Among the typical sanctions there was a travel ban for selected individuals of recalcitrant regimes and measures proposed to freeze their financial assets. Sanctions fulfil several functions as Eriksson emphasizes: signalize Union's dissatisfaction, stigmatize the goal, act as a replacement for an armed conflict, and potentially also change the political behaviour of the target actors.[18] Nevertheless, due to the fact that the AU has never imposed or been in a position to be able to impose more severe sanctions or boycotts on important commodities such as timber, minerals or oil, one cannot expect that the sanctions themselves would change the behaviour of the sanctioned states. They are rather symbolic messages within the broader peacemaking strategy of the African Union.

A sensitive matter for the PSC concerning imposing of sanctions and condemning every unconstitutional change of regime could be the cases when a military coup can provide an opportunity

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[15] WILLIAMS, ref. 3, p. 5

[16] UNITED NATIONS. *Charter of the United Nations* [online]. New York: United Nations, 1945, Chapter VIII [cit. 2014-29-09]. Available from: www.un.org/en/documents/charter/

[17] AFRICAN UNION. *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* [online]. Addis Ababa, 2002, Article 7 [cit. 2014-24-11]. Available from: www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Protocol_peace_and_security.pdf.

[18] ERIKSSON, Mikael. *Supporting democracy in Africa: African Union's use of targeted sanctions to deal with unconstitutional changes of government*. Stockholm: FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2010, p. 10. Stockholm: FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency, October 2008, p. 8. ISSN 1650-1942.

for democratization by toppling an authoritative regime. The AU should therefore carefully consider granting a temporary recognition to some military juntas that have toppled an authoritative regime, especially in a situation when there are still many such regimes in Africa (e.g. Zimbabwe, Sudan, or Eritrea).[19] Moreover, due to the new uncompromising approach of the AU to an unconstitutional changes of government, the PSC finds itself in a difficult situation in which it must solve the question whether to recognise the new authorities that have toppled the regime via an armed insurrection (such as in Libya) or via popular protest (e.g. in Tunisia, Egypt, or most recently in Burkina Faso). The PSC should also carefully elaborate its reactions when the situation is far much less straightforward, i.e. when some African leaders held onto power by means of manipulated elections or had abolished limits in their terms (e.g. Omar Bongo, president of Gabon, who came to power in 1967 and ruled in a one-party polity until 1991, when a new constitution introduced a multiparty system and a two-term limit that he quickly abolished and served until his death in 2009, and others like Lansana Conté of Guinea, who ruled from 1984 until his death in 2008, Sam Numoja of Namibia, who ruled from 1990 to 2005 and still retains considerable influence in the political life of the country, Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso ruling from 1987 until October 2014, when he was essentially overthrown in popular protest, and of course the successful overstayer Yoweri Museveni of Uganda ruling from 1986).

CONCLUSION

During its existence the Union has carried out a number of activities towards its ultimate goal of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa," be it political activities, peacekeeping or peacemaking. It was so with a far greater degree than any other African organization at a much lower level has ever managed to achieve. However, also the AU suffers from similar political, bureaucratic, civilian, military or infrastructural deficits as these organizations, which considerably restricts its efficiency and make the gap between AU's security mandate and the sources for its achievement. If the AU is to fully accomplish all its set goals, it will have to deal primarily with the elimination of this gap.

Our analysis of the AU's ability to perform the different functions in the field of conflict management offers an answer to our initial question, whether African security problems may be more easily solved by the AU as a sovereign "regional" organization with a continental profile than by territorially limited regional organizations, that is not quite clear-cut. It was stated that the AU currently suffers from similar deficits as other African organizations; however, at the same time, perhaps thanks to its continental profile, it has managed to carry out a larger number of successful activities in the field of conflict management as opposed to these organizations. In our opinion, it cannot be said that the AU as an independent entity would be a more appropriate actor to solve Africa's security problems than local regional organizations; at the same time, it cannot be claimed that these organizations themselves would be actually more appropriate actors to solve Africa's security problems than the AU. Neither individual regional organizations, nor the AU can solve African problems independently. The only possible solution is their close cooperation and combination of the advantages of both. We believe that in order to achieve this solution, it is ideal to use and improve the APSA, which now already attaches a certain importance to the cooperating relationship between the shielding AU and shielded regional organizations.

The African Union and regional organizations have specific advantages for carrying out conflict management. Conflict management at the continental level has its advantages in the fact that the distance between the AU and the current conflict is greater than the distance between the subcontinental organization and the conflict. Hence the AU can approach the conflict with detachment and adopt an impartial stance towards the conflict actors. The fact that the governments of sovereign member countries associated in a regional organization, just as their own territory, can often be a part of the problem makes the existence of a supranational authority, such as the AU, a necessity. Moreover,

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[19] OMOROGBE, Eki Yemisi. A club of incumbents? The African Union and coups d'etat, *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*. 2011, vol. 44, no. 1, p. 154.

the AU is more capable of involving the civil society in the process, which tends to be silenced at the state or subcontinental levels at large as the voice of political opposition. As a continental body, AU can better represent African security interests in the global field. Finally, it has a greater ability to gain long-time international institutional support, which Africa needs so much. On the other hand, the proximity of regional organizations to the area of conflict can be viewed as an advantage as well. These organizations are much better acquainted with the factors standing in the background of the conflict and its main actors; they know the area very well and can intervene much faster than a continental body.

In our opinion, an ideal profile of an actor capable of solving Africa's security problems is in the form of the African Union and its APSA shielding and representing a platform of equal cooperation of the Union with individual regional organizations and combining the advantages of both of these actors' approach towards conflict management. The African Union should attribute a role to regional organizations that they deserve (not only in the field of building the African Standby Force /ASF/ as it is now, but also in other fields, such as conflict prevention or peacemaking) and exploit their advantages and experience in dealing with conflicts in their regions.

In such coordination, the AU would fulfil a legitimizing, mobilizing and unifying role. Its task would be to formally assign the activities of peacekeeping and conflict management to the individual regions, by doing so AU would provide its legitimacy and a trustworthy continental diplomatic umbrella. This would facilitate the mobilization of local and international support for these activities and AU could be in their charge. As soon as these activities are accomplished, the AU could perform a vital coordinating function between the individual regional organizations, settle their mutual quarrels and thus ensure the trustworthiness and efficiency of their actions. Its unifying role could also provide the concordance with regional organizations in public performances and could help to make use of the network of many regional initiatives for the peaceful coexistence of various interest groups within and across the African regions. To make such a formation functional on a long-term basis, regional organizations and the AU will have to promote the mutual relationship of trust and understanding and remove the limitations of their efficiency, which have been mentioned above several times.

We also believe that a similarly important essence for the success of the APSA is the openness of the platform towards the cooperation with international organizations and external actors. Without this, any efforts in the management of African conflicts would be doomed to failure. There are several reasons why the approach "African solutions to African problems" must be seen as inappropriate at the turn of the 21st century.

The basic critical question that arises in this context is whether in the era of mind-blowing globalization in nearly every area of human effort it is practical for any continent or region to isolate itself from the rest of the world. In our opinion, it is definitely not. Africa is still an objective part of looking for solutions to global problems especially via participation of its states in the UN. This organization was established in order to make the world a safer place for all nations regardless of their location, socioeconomic and political background or wealth. Due to that, the UN should be involved in solving security problems in Africa just like anywhere else in the world and Africa should be open to these solutions. In fact, this is in accordance with the principles of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine adopted by UN members in 2005 and binding all states, not only in Africa, to assume responsibility for protecting the population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic purges and crimes against humanity. Although the R2P imposes a primary obligation on the host state, in a situation when this state fails to protect its population the international society acting via the UN has the responsibility to respond to the given situation, including the possibility of using force.[20] Besides that, Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter state relatively explicitly that it is the UN Security Council that is to take over the political leadership in any response to an armed conflict requiring force solutions, and therefore, on principle, the response to such a conflict cannot be only an African matter.[21] Finally,

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[20] UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. *2005 World summit outcome* [online]. New York: United Nations, Sixtieth session, October 2005, p. 30 [cit. 2014-29-09]. Available from: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/A-RES-60-1-E.pdf

[21] UNITED NATIONS, ref. 16, Chapters VII and VIII

especially in the context of the colonial and Cold-War history of the continent, it would also be wrong and cynical to assume that African conflicts have a purely local or domestic origin.

The aforementioned goes hand in hand with the fact that the criticized approach is based on a rather misleading description of conflict management initiatives in Africa. Perhaps the most important misinterpretation of reality relates to the weakening role of the UN and unshakable faith that Africa will build up forces that will make the UN on this continent redundant. The ASF was hoped to be operational in 2008, this was gradually extended, but the Force is still not operational. The current aspiration is for 2015, but it is not clear that this date will be met either. It is true that from the early 1990s up until now, the UN has been by far the most crucial actor engaged in the management of African conflicts and played a major role in the greatest and most severe peacekeeping operations on the continent. Similarly, as opposed to other continents, the UN Security Council dedicates to Africa the largest share of its time and resources. Therefore the support of the approach "African solutions to African problems" on the part of some African governments does not seem to be a necessity stemming from the international negligence of the continent, but more likely from ideological reasons and protection of regimes from external pressure. In fact, one of the major outcomes of this text was the identification of great dependence of the AU and regional organizations on material and financial assistance of external actors.

Indeed, there is no guarantee that even if Africa develops the military capacity anticipated in the ASF concept, African states will be able to reach the necessary consensus for their delivery in some controversial cases. In this context, the African solutions approach entails unsubstantiated and carefree faith in the abilities and willingness of the present-day African elites to guarantee peace and security for the continent. On the contrary, it is more realistic that some African states will oppose the development of standby force of rapid reaction capable of conducting operations of civil protection and a broader R2P agenda. Jeffrey Herbst, an American political scientist and expert in African issues, shares this assumption: *"Such a force, by definition, would have the potential to threaten African leaders and would have had a call on the most precious resource that African leaders have: loyal soldiers."* [22] However, we think that there would be a much greater threat for Africa's security if its regionalization starts to take the direction towards preferring regime security to human security.

In connection to the formation of the ASF, it can also be presupposed that it will be assembled unevenly across the continent or that in some of its parts it will not be assembled at all. This can be deduced from the considerably uneven levels of political and financial commitment of African states to the AU and other regional formations, the manifestations of which have been mentioned above several times. In such circumstances, it can be anticipated that those regional organizations are more likely to thrive that will bring a lot of foreign finances to the continent and will not have great demands on African states, let alone have the R2P principles on their agenda. According to Herbst, African leaders are: *"extremely enthusiastic about particular types of regional cooperation, especially those that highlight sovereignty, help secure national leaders, and ask little in return".* [23]

Finally, our last objection to the approach of "African solutions to African problems" regards the fact that it is very often the non-African bodies that are more efficient as a mediator and negotiator in African conflicts than the African ones. If the conflict participants followed this approach, then they would nearly always express within their requirements for mediation their preference for a particular African state that would adopt a position favourable for them. Hence an agreement on a particular African mediator tends to be very difficult in this context. Owing to that, mediation has often been led by neutral external actors.

It is evident from the aforementioned assessment that "African solutions to African problems" approach is not useful and sustainable either from the perspective of security and stability in Africa or potentially globally. What we regard as an obvious trend of the regionalization of approaches

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[22] HERBST, Jeffrey. Crafting regional cooperation in Africa. In: ACHARYA, A. and JOHNSON, A. I., eds. *Crafting cooperation: regional international institutions in comparative perspective.* Cambridge: University Press, 2007, p. 138. ISBN 978-0521699426.
[23] HERBST, ref. 22, p. 144

towards solving Africa's security issues must not be perceived as a process leading to conservation and isolation of the status quo or excluding other extraregional approaches offering solutions to security problems, but as a process giving an added value to the scale of possible solutions of local chronic problems in the form of regional approaches and tools. It is not only the African states that must make sure that the APSA as a cooperating platform of the AU and regional organizations will be open to cooperation with international organizations and other external actors. Also these external actors in particular must be open to this cooperation and eliminate African fears of withdrawing their interest from Africa. Just as the approach of "African solutions to African problems" is not useful and sustainable for the security and stability in Africa, then the approach of "our region's solutions to our region's problems" is not useful for any African region either. Dealing with Africa's complex security challenges will not be successful unless searching for African solutions will be replaced by searching for efficient solutions.