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Analysis of conflict prevention and conflict resolution interventions by the African Union and Regional Economic Communities in violent conflicts in Africa for the years 2013-2015

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Acronyms

A.D.R.	Sahara Arab Democratic Republic
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AEC	African Economic Community
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
APSP	Africa Peace and Security Programme
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUCISS	African Union Commission of Inquiry for South Sudan
AUEOM	African Union Election Observation Mission
AUHIP	African Union High Implementation Panel
CADSP	Common African Defence and Security Policy
CAR	Central African Republic
CASF	Central African Standby Force
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern Southern Africa
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EASBRICOM	Eastern Africa Standby Brigade Coordination Mechanism
EASBRIG	Eastern Africa Standby Brigade
EASF	East African Standby Force
EASFCOM	Eastern Africa Standby Force Coordination Mechanism
EASFSEC	Eastern African Standby Force Secretariat
ECA	EU Court of Auditors
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOM	Election Observation Mission
ESF	ECOWAS Standby Force
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GISAT-BF	International Support and Follow Up Group for Transition in Burkina Faso
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
HCB	Heidelberg Conflict Barometer
ICG	International Contact Groups
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGCLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
INEC	Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
ISS	Institute for Security Studies

LCBC	Lake Chad Basin Commission
LOGBASE	Eastern Africa Standby Force Headquarters and Logistics Base
LPA	Libyan Political Agreement
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LTO	Long-Term Observers
MISAHELL	AU mission for Mali and the Sahel
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRG	Mediation Reference Group
NARC	North African Regional Capability
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OIC	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PF	Peace Fund
PLANELM	EASF Planning Element
PoW	Panel of Wise
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RCI-LRA	Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA
REC	Regional Economic Community
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
RM	Regional Mechanisms
RTF	Regional Task Force
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASF	South African Standby Force
SRCC	Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson
STO	Short-Term Observers
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Database Program
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur
UNOAU	United Nations Office to the African Union
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force

Foreword

The Addis Ababa University's Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) works to support peace and security in Africa. Its Africa Peace and Security Programme (APSP), a joint venture of the African Union and the IPSS, is a premiere source for substantial and high quality contributions towards promoting African-led solutions for peace and security challenges for the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Regional Mechanisms (RMs).

Against this background, the IPSS/APSP started in 2016 to support the implementation of a systematic impact analysis of the African Peace and Security Architecture's (APSA) contributions to peace and security across the African continent through the conflict spectrum. The impact analysis focuses on interventions in the areas of diplomacy, mediation and Peace Support Operations (PSOs). The initiative began in 2013 by the German GIZ in cooperation with the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), financed by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany.

IPSS/APSP welcomes the cooperation with GIZ and ECDPM and the decision to conduct from 2017 onwards the joint annual APSA Impact Analysis - of which previous summary findings and key messages are being presented in this document. The IPSS/APSP supports this document also as a complementary body of research to highlight progress and bottlenecks in promoting African peace and security through this unique policy framework.

The detailed annual research and analysis of more than 25 conflicts across the African continent supports the IPSS/APSP's mandate in various ways. The knowledge and insights gained help to feed the perspectives and learning within the AU Commission, RECs and their member states and their policy exchanges with international partners and stakeholders in the civil society and academic circles. The findings and case studies provide also a rich base for peer exchange and learning. The material will be used for training in master courses and will help to deepen the research of students and post-graduate scholars and their knowledge about African peace and security, the APSA and its conflict contribution potential for the continent. Finally, the comprehensive background material of the APSA Impact Analysis provides useful sources to dig deep into the research of particular conflicts and the extent to which these could be solved, or not, and provides lessons learned and policy recommendations for political decision makers in order to contribute to the ambitious goal of the African Heads of States and Governments for "Silencing the Guns by 2020".

Beyond that, the APSA Impact Analysis bears the potential to support the monitoring of the APSA 2016-2020 Roadmap, officially published by the AU in April 2016. It builds on the achievements and challenges resulting from the implementation of the previous APSA Roadmap (2011-2013) and is the result of an inclusive and participatory process involving different departments at the AUC and at the RECs/RMs."[1] According to the AU, the "APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 is a strategic document and outlines five strategic objectives with related indicators." Monitoring of the objectives and indicators of the Roadmap will be led internally by the AU Peace and Security Department (AU PSD) and steps are currently being made towards the development of such a monitoring system.

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[1]   AU (2016)

The IPSS/APSP recommends this reading for the non-initiated audience of policy makers and practitioners interested in the current and future implementation of the APSA but presents it also as a welcome complementary perspective to those stakeholders who have been following and supporting the implementation of the APSA over the course of the past years.

Michelle Ndiaye, Director of the Africa Peace and Security Programme at the IPSS and Head of the Tana Forum Secretariat

Executive Summary

With this Discussion Paper we aim to inform the debate regarding the promotion of peace and security by African regional organisations through diplomacy, mediation and Peace Support Operations (PSOs) activities under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This work is rooted in a longer-term engagement of ECDPM through the APSA Impact Analysis project, supported by the German government through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and in collaboration with the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at the University of Addis Ababa.

This paper is directed towards a wider audience interested in the African Union (AU) and in the efforts by African regional organisations to promote peace and security on the continent. This work is also addressed to policy makers and practitioners seeking an update on existing information or a different lens to existing knowledge. The findings presented are the result of intensive desk research, covering the years 2013 to 2015. Building on this research, the paper presents 12 key messages, which are summarised in five broad findings.

Summary findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings from this research confirm a general observation by APSA stakeholders and observers: the APSA has been a very useful framework to promote peace and security across the African continent. This message stands out but the analysis allows us to qualify it along a number of more critical observations from the research. This analysis is based on figures from quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis through cases studies, and other sources of publicly available data.

First, regarding the coordination and cooperation under the APSA umbrella, the analysis shows that the AU and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs) have gradually increased their joint efforts when intervening in violent conflicts. Over the course of 2013 to 2015, the joint efforts of the AU and REC/RMs grew from 56% to 69%, and even rose to 75% in 2014. The cooperation and the coordination of efforts with international - meaning non-African - partners to address violent conflicts, result in a variety of cooperation models to strengthen collaboration and joint efforts towards solving highly intense conflicts. Yet, there is room for improvement.

Secondly, findings confirm that questions about subsidiarity, comparative advantages and division of labour between the AU and REC/RMs for addressing violent conflicts remain unsolved. The absence of clear interpretations of agreements, and certain political conditions - within and among AU Member States - often lead to ad-hoc and pragmatic solutions. High levels of coordination and the alignment of AU and REC/RM activities increase the likelihood of the effectiveness of their interventions. However, this does not constitute any guarantee of success, given the unresolved question of subsidiarity.

Thirdly, findings show that the AU and REC/RMs have increasingly intervened through a combination of instruments, most commonly through mediation and diplomacy. For example, as figures from the analysis show, the combination of diplomacy and mediation instruments by the AU and REC/RMs increased from 32% to 40% and 44% respectively between 2013 and 2015. In addition, the higher the intensity of a violent conflict, the more likely interventions and activities by the AU or the REC/RMs under the umbrella of the APSA become. For example, over the period 2013-2015, the AU and REC/RMs together addressed 89% of all wars on the continent. While the AU and REC/RMs addressed the overwhelming majority of high-intensity conflicts, on average 56% of violent conflicts, were not addressed for a variety of reasons as highlighted below.

Fourthly, our analysis shows that the involvement of the AU and REC/RMs in mediation and preventive diplomacy in violent conflicts has increased. Figures show that, in the period between 2013 and2015, the

AU and REC/RMs were involved in about 73% of those peace processes where peace agreements were signed, though their role was mostly support rather than a leading one. The AU in particular displayed a growing engagement. Furthermore, missions related to elections have become a relevant platform for preventive diplomacy by the AU and RECs in conflict-prone contexts, especially when high-level pre-electoral missions are deployed in combination with short and long-term election observation missions.

Fifth and lastly, findings show that decisions by AU Member States on how they position themselves vis-à-vis a violent conflict are heavily determined by national and regional political objectives. Principles of non-indifference are often balanced, or even traded, against principles of national sovereignty and regional interests. The AU Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol provide both some compelling as well as restraining factors regarding the latter. The specific role of regional powers and that of larger AU Member States was found to be an important element for assessing the probability, the timing and the opportunity for interventions and activities to take place under the umbrella of the APSA. Over the period ranging from 2013 to 2015, in the 10 largest AU member states (measured by GDP) on average 63% of violent conflicts were not addressed, compared to the 56% average of all violent conflicts across the continent.

1. Introduction

After more than a decade following the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) by the African Union (AU) and recent efforts by African governments and institutions to ensure sustainable funding for conflict prevention and management in Africa, questions are raised by policy makers and observers of the APSA about its contribution to peace and security in Africa, and how the implementation of this policy framework can be better monitored in the future. The question is highly topical in view of the evolving African peace and security context (see Box 1).

This paper aims to provide a contribution to this discussion based on a longer-term engagement of ECDPM through the APSA Impact Analysis project, funded by the German government through the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) to get better insight about the promotion of peace and security of the AU and African regional organisations through diplomacy, mediation and Peace Support Operations (PSOs). Starting this project in 2012, the findings presented in this Discussion Paper cover the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 while taking into account trends and observations from a pilot analysis covering the years 2007 to 2012, equally executed under the same cooperation.[2] For the analysis of APSA interventions in 2015, the Addis Ababa-based Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) joined this collaboration and is preparing to incorporate this exercise into its annual work plan as of 2017. Findings of this work had been presented by GIZ and ECDPM in 2015 to members of the AU Peace and Security Council and international partners at the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa and the same by GIZ, ECDPM and the IPSS in 2016.

The paper is directed towards a wider audience interested in better understanding the efforts of the AU and African regional organisations to promote peace and security on the continent, but it also contains findings which might be relevant for the initiated followers of the APSA. Taking this focus into account, the next section gives an overview of how the AU and African regional organisations have positioned themselves institutionally since the early 2000s to promote peace and security. Section three provides a brief overview about the APSA's key instruments to engage in conflict prevention and management and describes in brief the methodology of this APSA Impact Analysis project. In the fourth section, we present and briefly discuss key findings from this monitoring exercise, followed by a concluding section highlighting current and future challenges.

Box 1: Background – The evolving African peace and security context

The conflict context in Africa is not static and has seen a number of fluctuations in the past two decades. Since the establishment of the APSA, African and regional organisations have achieved significant gains in peace and security on the continent. African capabilities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts have grown substantially. At the same time, a reversed trend in the number of conflicts is visible since 2010. Following the end of the Cold War, a number of frozen conflicts in Africa reignited violently, including those in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).[3] After these subsided, the number of conflicts declined steadily across the continent, resulting in a declining number of conflicts and conflict-related deaths in Africa.[4] However, several databases point to a growing number of civilian casualties, and a rise in conflict-related fatalities and events in the past decade. Since 2010 there has been a reversed trend from the initial decrease in war since the early 2000s.[5] Data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) shows that both conflict-related fatalities and the number of political violent events declined to their lowest levels in 2005-2006 before increasing again.[6] According to the

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[2]   GIZ (2016),
[3]   Cilliers and Schünemann (2013).
[4]   Ibid.
[5]   Guéhenno (2017).
[6]   Cilliers (2015).

Uppsala Conflict Database Program (UCDP), 2014 was the most violent year since the end of the Second World War, including in Africa but also the Middle East, with more than 100,000 people killed in organised violence.[7] This makes it the highest number in 20 years, as the death count in organised violence had not exceeded 100,000 since the Rwandan genocide took place in 1994. Currently, while the majority of Africa is generally at peace[8], most conflict-related casualties in Africa have become concentrated in a relatively small number of countries, including Nigeria, South Sudan and Somalia.[9] According to ACLED, Africa together with the Middle East remain the most heavily burdened with violent conflict, meaning that Africa and the Middle East endure the most armed conflict when measured by population size over time.[10]

According to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, the Sub-Sahara African region remains the one with the most 'high-intensity' level conflicts with 14 of a total of 38 conflicts globally in this category.[11] Most United Nations peacekeeping operations are in Africa, with the highest number of UN troops deployed there.[12] Recent years have also shown a growing number of terrorist attacks in Africa, with primarily civilian deaths. Data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an open-source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970 through 2015 based at the University of Maryland, shows an exponential growth in terrorist attacks in sub-Sahara Africa between 2010 and 2015, with a peak in 2014.[13] In 2015, ACLED recorded a decrease of 14% in armed conflicts compared to 2014, with 14,640 individual conflict events, marking the first negative conflict trend since 2009. However, 15 states witnessed an overall increase in political violence, so the trend, though counting for the whole continent, is not necessarily representative of the level of the individual state.[14]

Despite a growing trend in Africa over the past two decades from inter-state wars to intrastate wars, pockets of extremely intense conflict are not limited to national borders. Nevertheless, Cilliers (2015) notes, most armed conflicts today are internal rather than between states, making internal wars the predominant form of conflict in Africa. Threats to peace and stability in Africa have increasingly emerged as a result of governance challenges and attempts for unconstitutional changes of government. According to ACLED, riots and protests have seen the sharpest absolute and proportional increase in the period 1997-2013, while the proportion of political violence involving battles has decreased.[15] Following the wave of post-Cold War democratisation in sub-Sahara Africa – and more recently the pressures for democratisation in North Africa – the continent has faced increased instances of contestations of the quality of multiparty democracy and electoral outcomes. Electoral violence flared in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and recently in Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Burundi.[16] In 2015, no less than 13 countries in Africa had elections scheduled, and in 11 of these, there was a considerable risk of electoral violence given pre-existing tensions and conflicts. The pressure of potential electoral violence will remain high in the coming years: in 2016, 17 elections were scheduled, while 13 countries will go to vote in 2017.

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[7]   UCDP (2015).
[8]   ISS (2015b).
[9]   The Guardian (2015).
[10]   ACLED (2015).
[11]   HIIK (2017).
[12]   Renwick (2015).
[13]   GTD (2016).
[14]   ACLED (2016).
[15]   ACLED.
[16]   Vanheukelom (2016).

2.   Unpacking the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

2.1.   The establishment of the African Union: from non-intervention to non-indifference

The establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) took place within the context of the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU).[17] This transformation was the result of developments both in Africa as well as broader global developments at the end of the Cold War. Already in 1990, the OAU adopted a *Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situations in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World[18]*, which initiated a new period in the way the OAU aimed to deal with human rights, democracy and peace, and with security and development. However, the domain of peace and security continued to be considered the exclusive domestic jurisdiction of member states. Whenever the OAU was expected to intervene in internal disputes or systematic violations of human rights, it declined, insisting on existing principles of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs (Article III of the OAU Charter). The conflicts in Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone and the genocide in Rwanda painfully brought these gaps to the forefront.[19]

In 2002, the African Union was established as the successor of the OAU, symbolising a normative shift from non-intervention to non-indifference accompanied with the establishment of an elaborate institutional architecture.[20] The AU Constitutive Act (2000) includes a commitment to respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance (Art. 4(m)), respect for the sanctity of human life (Art. 4(o), and condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments (Art. 4(p), amongst other principles. But above all, a ground-breaking principle was adopted in the Constitutive Act, giving the AU the right "to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (Article 4(h).[21] Along with the establishment of the AU was the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) as the sole decision-making body of the AU and the anchor of the APSA's institutional framework (see Box 2).

At the same time, the importance of sovereignty had been firmly upheld in the AU's Constitutive Act, reflected in Article 4(h) where it states, "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State *pursuant to a decision of the Assembly* in respect of grave circumstances" (own emphasis added). Article 3 of the AU Constitutive Act further notes that the objectives of the AU will be to "defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States" (Art. 3(b)) as well as "promote peace, security, and stability on the continent (Art. 3(f)). Thus while the PSC has played an increasingly important role in setting the strategic direction and agenda of the AU's conflict prevention and management, the role of the AU Assembly as "the supreme organ of the Union" (Art. 3(2)) indicates that AU member states and their Heads of States and Government continue to play a decisive role as gatekeepers. Recent conflict situations, including South Sudan[22] and Burundi[23] (for the latter, see also Box 12), suggest that as regards

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[17]   Desmidt (2016).
[18]   According to the Declaration, the "[…] possibilities of achieving the objectives we have set will be constrained as long as an atmosphere of lasting peace and stability does not prevail in Africa", cit. *Declaration on the Political and Socio-Economic Situations in Africa and the Fundamental Changes Taking Place in the World.*
[19]   Dersso (2013).
[20]   The normative foundations of the APSA consist of the African Union Constitutive Act, The Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol) and the Common African Defence And Security Policy (CADSP).
[21]   AU (2000).
[22]   Williams (2016).

interventions by the AU and/or regional organisations in conflict situations, Member States continue to set clear 'red lines' despite these normative shifts that went with the transformation of the OAU to the AU. However, as the situation in The Gambia shows, the AU and RECs have also upheld principles of democracy and the rule of law in line with the AU Constitutive Act. As such, the functioning and operationalisation of the APSA should be firmly contextualised in political realities.

Box 2: Background – The institutional framework of the APSA

With the establishment of the AU and the APSA, a number of bodies were established which function as the institutional skeleton of the AU's and REC's day to day interventions and activities in peace and security in Africa. The APSA is institutionally diverse and far from static. The APSA and its institutions, while building on experiences by selected RECs and similar structures in the RECs, function as a platform for cooperation and coordination within the APSA, with similar bodies at the REC level, as well as with external partners. It is composed of the following elements:

The **Peace and Security Council (PSC)** is the AU's standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts (PSC Protocol, Art. 2(1)) body and the cornerstone of the APSA. The PSC is made up of 15 members, 10 of which are elected for a term of two years, while five are elected to serve for three years. The PSC is designed to provide "a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa."[24]

The **African Union Commission** is responsible for the implementation of PSC decisions and provides operational support. This happens mainly through the AU Commission Chairperson and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, who report to the PSC on the implementation of PSC decisions and their own initiatives. The Chairperson and Commissioner are supported by the Peace and Security Department (PSD).

The **African Standby Force (ASF)** is the multi-dimensional force of the APSA covering police, military and civilian dimensions. It was established by Article 13 of the PSC Protocol[25] and is made up of five regional and multidisciplinary brigades.[26] The ASF includes military, civilian and police elements, which are expected to complement each other when mandated to implement PSC decisions that have to do with Peace Support Operations (PSO).

The **Panel of the Wise (PoW)** is an advisory component of the APSA with 'silent' and preventive diplomacy as its main areas of engagement. It consists of five prominent African personalities.[27] Each member represents one of the five regions of the continent. Members of the Panel act to promote peace and resolve conflicts either on the invitation of the PSC, the Chairperson of the Commission or on their own initiative.[28] The Panel of the Wise has been engaged in different conflict contexts since its inauguration in 2007, including Madagascar, Egypt and Kenya.

The **Peace Fund** is a financial instrument created under Article 21 of the PSC protocol. The PF shall provide the necessary financial resources for the operationalisation of the APSA. The Peace Fund is supposed to be funded through contributions from donors, member states, private sector, civil society and individuals.[29]

The **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)** is the AU's early warning system and aims to provide timely and reliable data to warn the PSC and the AU Commission of potential conflicts and outbreaks of violence. The CEWS coordinates efforts where possible with similar structures in the RECs.

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[23]   Dersso (2016).
[24]   Bah et all. (2014.
[25]   Ibid.
[26]   These include: East African Standby Force (EASF), South African Standby Force (SASF), Central African Standby Force (CASF), North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) and ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF).
[27]   Desmidt (2016).
[28]   Bah et all. (2014).
[29]   Recently, steps have been undertaken by the African Union to revitalise the contributions to the Peace Fund, building on recommendations made by the High Representative for the Peace Fund, Dr. Donald Kaberuka (see also section below on the African Union).

2.2. The foundations of the APSA

Before the official establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2001, most Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were already in place. These RECs developed individually and have differing mandates and mechanisms, including for peace and security. The objective of the RECs was generally seen as to facilitate regional economic integration between members of the individual regions in the wider African Economic Community (AEC) established under the Abuja Treaty (1991).[30] The APSA is built upon the five regions of Africa (North, South, East, West and Central). Since the AU recognises eight RECs and two Regional Mechanisms (RMs), the membership of REC/RMs and the five regions of the APSA overlap. Beyond the institutional challenges this creates for effective coordination and cooperation, the underlying question and tension is one of subsidiarity, leadership and political will in responding to situations of conflict and crisis. The relationship between the AU and REC/RMs is covered in a number of legal frameworks and documents. First and foremost, Article 16 of the *2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (PSC Protocol) outlines the relationship between the AU and REC/RMs for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The article states that the REC/RMs are part of the overall security architecture of the AU, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. A second key legal basis is the 2008 Memorandum signed between the African Union and the REC/RMs, which is discussed in more detail in section below on The Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs).

The African Union (AU)

Since the creation of the African Union, peace and security, including the operationalisation of the APSA, has arguably become the most demanding and most expensive part of the AU's budget and agenda. In a context of sustained political unrests and violent conflicts on the continent, the AU increasingly engages in complex efforts towards conflict management and prevention and peace support operations. Never have more African troops been deployed in Africa, both as part of AU/REC peace support operations as well as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations.[31] According to Williams (2014), not only are many of the interrelated and overlapping institutions and organisational structures of the APSA steadily in place, they have also "massively increased the tempo and scope of its conflict management activities" which shows that peace and security is at the top of the African Union's agenda.[32]

Given the expanding agenda and the exponential number of meetings and decisions taken in the field of peace and security by the AU, its regional role has been increasingly recognised by external partners and donors. The relationships between the African Union and the European Union and United Nations respectively are the most crucial. The expanding role and agenda have also led to a growing self-confidence of the AU, which frequently underlines the burden it bears through conflict management and prevention and thus its contribution to international peace and security, in meetings and engagements with external partners.

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[30] Website of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) overview, consulted January 2017.
[31] In 2015, nine UN peacekeeping operations were deployed in Africa. Meanwhile, one joint AU-UN peacekeeping operation (UNAMID) was deployed in Darfur, Sudan. The AU maintained its mission in Somalia (AMISOM), established in 2007, to fight al-Shabaab and support the Federal Government of Somalia and the statebuilding process in the country. Furthermore, the AU authorised the continued deployment of the Regional Coordination Initiative against the LRA (RCI-LRA) in the DR Congo, Uganda, and the Central African Republic, and authorized the deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin in the Lake Chad region.
[32] Williams (2014).

Since its establishment, the AU and its Member States have had to rely on external funding for its peace and security activities. Experts assume that close to 90% of the peace and security bill of the AU is currently footed by external partners.[33] External partners of the AU and AU Member States contribute directly to peace support operations through separate mechanisms and accounts, and in kind, according to the type of peace operation and the role a particular member state plays in that operation. As external partners provide the bulk of financial resources, as well as training, logistics and planning support, this reliance on external sources of financing has created considerable tensions both within the AU and between the AU and its external partners. In its search for predictable, flexible and sustainable funding, the AU has recently aimed at setting a new strategic direction. In January and June 2015, AU Member States agreed to contribute up to 25% of the costs of AU peace and security efforts, including peace support operations, by the year 2020, as part of the AU's commitment to "Silence the Guns" by 2020 within the larger Agenda 2063 for Development.[34] In July 2016, the AU Summit adopted the recommendations made by the High Level Panel for the Peace Fund headed by the AU's Special Envoy Donald Kaberuka, including introducing a 0.2% levy to defined imports by AU members states to increase the funding of the AU.[35] It is expected that the 0.2% levy will endow the Peace Fund with $325m in 2017 rising to a total of $400m by 2020 against an estimated overall Peace Fund budget of $302m in 2020. This is expected to fund 100% of running costs and 75% of programmes of the AU and 25% of AU/REC-led peace support operations. As regards to peace support operations, it is expected that 75% or the remaining funding will be provided by the UN through assessed contributions. Lastly, any unutilised balances will be held in the Crisis Reserve Facility to enable rapid response to unforeseen crises.

The Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs)

The AU officially recognises only eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and two so-called Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, - Management and Resolution (see Box 3)[36]. This has led to some institutional challenges, primarily as regards the African Standby Force (ASF), one of the six continental elements of the institutional framework of the APSA as highlighted above in Box 2. The ASF consists of five regional standby brigades. Since the five regions overlap with the membership of various RECs, which existed before the establishment of the African Union and the APSA, two additional coordinating mechanisms were established to manage the regional standby brigade of the ASF in East and North Africa, namely the East African Standby Force (EASF) and Secretariat and the North African Regional Capability (NARC). The regional standby brigades for West, Central and South Africa are managed and hosted by ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC respectively. Given that several African Union member states are member of various REC/RMs, this often creates an intersection of multiple RECs acting on peace and security issues in their respective member states.

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[33] Ibid.
[34] AU (2015a) and AU (2015b).
[35] Miyandazi (2016), see also Desmidt and Marclint (2016).
[36] African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) see http://www.au.int/en/organs/recs.

Box 3: Background – The regions as the building blocks of the APSA

The eight RECs recognised by the AU are the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). *African Union, overview of Regional Economic Communities (REC)*

Initially, the legal framework of the regional standby brigade for East Africa, the East African Standby Force (EASF), was a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (MOU) signed by Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, the active members of EASBRIG, in 2005. South Sudan has received observer status since April 2013 and is expected to become a full member soon. In the absence of one REC covering these ten countries, the regional Heads of State and Government authorised the creation of a Coordination Mechanism called EASFCOM (formerly EASBRICOM). In June 2014, the ten members of the EASF signed a new Agreement on the Establishment of the EASF, solidifying the legal status of the EASF, as a regional mechanism for conflict prevention and management in East Africa. The EASFCOM's status was also elevated in 2014 to a full secretariat, the Eastern Africa Standby Force Secretariat (EASFSEC). According to the EASF Secretariat "The establishment is based on past experiences of conflicts in Africa, such as the Rwanda Genocide, war in Sudan, war in Somalia among others." The EASFSEC and the EASF Planning Element (PLANELM) are located in Nairobi, Kenya while the Eastern Africa Standby Force Headquarters and Logistics Base (LOGBASE) are located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

As the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) has been dormant since 1989, the North African Regional Capacity (NARC) was created to fill a sub-regional vacuum in North Africa. Revitalising the AMU proved to be difficult due to political dynamics amongst member states. To enable North African countries to contribute to the African Standby Force, the NARC was established in 2007 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In the absence of a joint secretariat to liaise cooperation amongst NARC member states, Libya voluntarily played this coordinating role during the initial phase of starting up NARC which lasted for three years (2005-2008). But the NARC has encountered considerable challenges in establishing the appropriate legal frameworks and thus operationalisation the standby force. According to the 2010 APSA Assessment, constitutional and legal regulations in some member states delayed the ratification of the NARC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), compounded by the reluctance of some NARC members to sign the founding documents. The on-going dispute over the status of Western Sahara continues to complicate the operationalisation of the NARC: four of the six members of NARC do not recognise the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic (A.D.R).

In 2008, the AU and eight RECs and RMs signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa (hereafter the 2008 Memorandum). The 2008 Memorandum between the AU and REC/RMs is the legal basis of the coordination between the AU and REC/RMs in the operationalisation of the APSA. Its objective is to "contribute to the full operationalisation and effective functioning of the African Peace and Security Architecture" (Article II, para 2(i)). According to the 2014 APSA Assessment (released in 2015), however, the issue of coordination and subsidiarity had not yet been resolved: "The absence of a clear definition and shared understanding of the principle of subsidiarity has led to varied and sometimes opposing interpretations of this principle by the AU, the UN, the RECs/RMs and other relevant stakeholders."[37] While the APSA assessment acknowledges the close coordination in certain crises, it also notes that this lack of clarity "at times created friction between the AU and the RECs/RMs in situations of crisis."[38] Other experts too have noted that the legal frameworks governing the relations between the AU and REC/RMs lack clarity. "The PSC protocol stresses the primary responsibility of the AU in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. The protocol spells out a top-down relationship whereby the AUC chairperson and the PSC are supposed to 'harmonize and coordinate the activities of the RECs' to ensure their coherence with

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[37]   APSA (2015).
[38]   Ibid.

AU principles. The [2008] memorandum […] stresses the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage without specifying the relevant modalities of implementation."[39]

In addition to lack of legal clarity, the challenges around subsidiarity are a direct consequence of the great diversity and diverging ways of development between the various RECs (and to a lesser extent the RMs), as a result of distinct historical and geographic foundations, with differing original mandates and regional political economy dynamics.[40] This has resulted in overlapping mandates between the various peace and security bodies of the RECs and the AU. The REC's distinct foundations and varying paths of development are key to take into account when assessing the effectiveness and quality of REC/RMs interventions in conflicts, and the mandate each of those is implementing.[41] IGAD, EAC, COMESA and ECOWAS have mandates to deal with peace and security. In addition, new regional organisations have sprung up, or existing regional organisations have expanded their original mandate and agenda. This includes, for example, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)[42] and recently, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in the fight against Boko Haram.[43]

3. Methodological approach

For the analysis of interventions by AU and RECs in the frame of the APSA, four types of interventions were considered. These are i) diplomatic interventions, ii) mediation, iii) peace support operations (PSOs), and iv) Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) activities. The monitoring for the years 2013 to 2015 was done annually on the basis of desk studies of publicly available material[44] and concentrated on all conflicts above a certain level of violence (see Box 4 for more details as regards the methodology). The analysis covered AU and REC/RM interventions between 24 to 29 violent conflicts on an annual basis over the period 2013-2015. These violent conflicts were situated across the African continent with most of the conflicts identified in Central Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Due to methodological challenges and difficulties in finding suitable material, the monitoring concentrated on the interventions i) to iii) and *de facto* had to exclude the PCRD interventions as explained in the following. Our

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[39] ISS (2017).

[40] See also ECDPM (2016).

[41] For example, the COMESA Authority established the COMESA Committee of Elders in 2006 to "serve as mediators for deployment by the office of the Secretary General for preventive peace-making assignments. SADC on the other hand has established the membership of the SADC Panel of Elders and Mediation Reference Group (MRG), approved by the Summit of SADC Organ Troika in August 2014. Coordination of these different institutional mechanisms and organs has been one reason behind the establishment of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise) in 2012. See APSA (2015).

[42] The ICGLR, which was initially conceptualised by the United Nations, has taken on an increasingly important regional role in addressing peace and security challenges in the Great Lakes Region, under the umbrella of the APSA. In 2000, United Nations Security Council resolutions 1291 and 1304 called for an International Conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region. Since then, the ICGLR has taken an increasingly important role, and has met at least twice a year to discuss urgent peace and security measures and take effective action, including election monitoring, for example in Sudan in 2015. ICGLR currently has 12 member states: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Republic of South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

[43] In 2014, the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin decided to re-activate the dormant Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the LCBC to fight Boko Haram. As the threat posed by Boko Haram increasingly concentrated on the region of Chad Lake, the Member States of the LCBC, in October 2014, identified the MNJTF as the platform to coordinate national military efforts.

[44] A wide variety of public sources are used in this regard. First and foremost, official documents such as public statements, official communiqués and reports of the AU and REC/RMs are the primary source of information. Sources further used include reports of the United Nations, expert analysis by think tanks and conflict research centres, conflict databases (such as Uppsala Conflict Database Programme (UCDP), Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and International Conflict Group Crisis Tracker amongst others) and international news and analysis.

research is based on a thorough scanning and analysis of publicly available documentation and secondary sources such as official reports, communiqués, statements, etc. It is plausible that the AU and REC/RMs undertook more joint efforts, but that these were not (yet) made publicly available.

Diplomatic interventions

Diplomatic interventions as understood under the methodology applied during our research include a wide array of activities and decisions ranging from holding meetings on the conflict situations (at various political levels), to varying levels of diplomatic statements (wording), to taking actions such as setting up high-level panels and adopting sanctions. Diplomatic interventions are undertaken by a whole range of actors by both the AU and REC/RMs.[45] We also looked at efforts of preventive diplomacy in countries where violence has not erupted yet or might erupt in the near future. Unsurprisingly, finding publicly available information on these preventive efforts has been challenging. Preventive diplomacy presumably takes place before conflicts escalate, and before AU and REC/RMs become visible engaged through more silent diplomacy.

Mediation efforts and preventive diplomacy

As regards mediation, we primarily focused on mediation efforts between conflicting parties, including warring or political parties, also as part of missions of the Panel of the Wise and election-related missions. Consultations between various parties are standing practice as part of election-related missions, and were analysed as such. Mediation efforts were understood as ranging from establishing mediation teams, organising consultations between parties, and reaching an intermediate or final peace agreement.

Peace support operations (PSOs)

A third important set of activities centre around PSOs and activities around the authorisation, deployment and maintenance of PSOs.[46] In general, activities analysed under this type of instrument range from convening of a resource mobilisation meeting, to authorising or mandating the deployment of a peace support operation, the deploying a peace support operations or extending a mandate. Over the course of the establishment of the African Union (AU) since 2001, the AU and REC/RMs have launched eleven PSOs in Africa. These PSOs have seen a variety of organisational set-ups, financing modalities and troop composition.[47] Given the importance of external financial support for peace support operations and peacekeeping in Africa, diplomatic efforts are invested in political dialogue between the AU and its external funders.[48] Given the primacy of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for international peace and security, all peace support operations mandated by the AU Assembly ideally seek UNSC approval, a difficult negotiation and process at times. Also between the AU and REC/RM, tensions have flared around the launch and leadership of peace support operations, given the unresolved issue of subsidiarity and regional leadership.[49]

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[45] For example, in 2014 in South Sudan, our monitoring methodology included the statement calling for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry (both international or regional) and taking necessary steps to prepare the establishment, as diplomatic interventions.

[46] The findings for this part of the analysis draws on separate work by GIZ and support of external consultants.

[47] Boutellis (2013).

[48] These include primarily the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America, China and others, such as some Gulf States.

[49] This became clear, for example, during the establishment of African-led Mission to Mali (AFISMA) in Mali in 2013, when there was lack of agreement between ECOWAS and the AU on who would take leadership, and concerns over engaging non-ECOWAS countries such as Chad.

Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)

As part of the monitoring of the activities of the AU and REC/RMs under the APSA, efforts were made to uncover post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) initiatives and efforts.[50] Some challenges were encountered in mapping these PCRD efforts. Firstly, we found little publicly available information on the activities under PCRD from AU and RECs. The implementation of PCRD efforts often happens at lower levels of governance, for example by national governments, rather than at the regional level. This issue of subsidiarity is shared among all instruments deployed under the APSA and is an import element in the current review of the PCRD Policy framework. Secondly, the assessment period of one year is probably too short to fully appreciate the effect and quality of PCRD measures within a specific conflict context.

Box 4: Background – the methodology of the APSA Impact Analysis

This methodology was developed by ECDPM and GIZ based on a pilot monitoring exercise (for the years 2007-2012) and informed by a recognition that the complexity and multidimensional structure of the APSA needed to be adequately captured. The methodology was reviewed with experts during an IPSS hosted workshop in November 2016 and will be further refined during the on-going involvement of IPSS in this project as well as an exchange with the AUC. The methodology which aims to understand the conflict context and assess the effectiveness and quality of the AU and/or REC interventions in a gradual process, is labour intensive[51] and consists of the following steps:

Step 1: Understanding conflicts

A first step is to identify the different conflicts in Africa during the year under assessment and provide a background and updated assessment of main events and developments for each conflict. The conflicts identified in the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer (HCB) are organised into what is called 'political conflict units', often at sub-national level, and measured by intensity on a scale of 1 to 5.[52] The annual HCB is used as a baseline, enriched with other databases and sources.[53]

Step 2: Clustering of conflict units

In a second step, the 'political conflict units' are clustered based on qualitative analysis of collected data along three criteria. These are: 1. whether conflict actors were linked, 2. whether conflict drivers were linked, and 3. whether or not the AU or/and REC considered certain conflicts together. For those conflict clusters that attain the level of 3 to 5 and have seen AU/REC interventions, the next step is taken.

Step 3: Extent and intensity of AU and REC interventions

In a third step, the extent and intensity of AU and REC engagement in violent conflict clusters (levels 3 to 5) are mapped in a chronological timeline. These interventions are mapped by actor (AU and/or REC) and the instruments used. Three (3) levels of intensity are ascribed to each intervention under each type of instrument, ranging from weaker (Level 1) to stronger (Level 3).[54] Cross-team corroboration and exchanges ensure consistency in ascribing levels to each intervention in all conflicts assessed.

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[50] The Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy framework was only adopted in 2006, but is an element of the APSA. The PCRD Framework's purpose is to "address the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants; the return and reintegration of displaced populations, grassroots level reconciliation; as well as lay the foundations for good governance in both the political and socio-economic spheres". African Union. PCRD Framework Document (2006), pg v.

[51] A group of five junior and senior professionals is conducting this monitoring work over a period of 4.5 months.

[52] In the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, conflicts are indexed from levels 1 to 5 according to increasing intensity in violence, namely 'Dispute' (level 1), 'Non-violent Crisis' (level 2), 'Violent Crisis' (level 3), 'Limited War' (level 4) and 'War' (level 5). See Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research Methodological Approach for more details, http://www.hiik.de/en/methodik/.

[53] These include the Uppsala Conflict Database Programme (UCDP), Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and the International Conflict Group Crisis Tracker, amongst others.

[54] Some examples include: *ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government decides to appoint a special envoy* (AU, Diplomacy, Level 1); *The PSC lifts sanctions* (AU, Diplomacy, Level 3); *The PSC deploys mission in Mali* (AU, PSO, Level 3); *IGAD Team of Mediators oversees signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (IGAD, Mediation, Level 3) (non-exhaustive). An 'indicative table of interventions' (with 'standard' examples of AU and REC/RM interventions) was established and used to harmonise the identification of AU and REC/RM interventions and ensure consistency across the years under review.

> **Step 4: Effectiveness of AU and REC interventions**
>
> To analyse the effectiveness of AU and REC interventions, three lines of inquiry are used. The first line looks at whether AU/REC interventions were responsive to escalation. A second line looks at whether the AU/REC intervention achieved the intended result. Combining these two, a third line looks at whether the interventions resulted in de-escalating the conflict. This judgement is categorised as follows: 'Overall successful', 'Partly successful', 'Too early to tell', 'Rather unsuccessful', accompanied with a justifying written analysis, using various conflict databases, expert analysis, and reports from international organisations, amongst others. Extensive peer review among researchers takes place to ensure consistency across all conflicts.
>
> **Step 5: Quality of AU and REC interventions**
>
> The methodology demands researchers to assess the quality of engagement by APSA actors. This assessment is based on three lines of inquiry. A first criterion is the *relative significance* of the role played by an APSA actor (i.e. Did the AU play a larger role than others?). The second is on the *appropriateness* of the degree of engagement (i.e. Was the AU's supporting role to the UN/REC the best option?). Lastly, synergies between different APSA actors and other international actors in the framework of an intervention are assessed. The quality of interventions is then judged as follows: 'Overall High Quality', 'Medium', or 'Mostly Low Quality', again with accompanying justification in written and extensive peer review among researchers.

4. Trends and observations of analysis of AU/REC interventions 2013-2015

This section summarises 12 key messages emerging from the annual APSA Impact Analysis project over the years 2013 to 2015.[55] The findings summarise information about the extent and intensity of AU and REC interventions and provide insights about the effectiveness and, where possible, the quality of these interventions. To the extent possible, quantifications have been added to support the messages as well as individual cases to illustrate the points made or to provide more background.

4.1. Coordination and cooperation between AU and REC/RMs and with international partners

Key message 1: Over the course of 2013 to 2015, the AU and REC/RMs have gradually increased their joint efforts when intervening in violent conflicts.

In line with its Constitutive Act, the African Union has a continental responsibility to respond to conflicts across Africa. This is clearly reflected in the high level of the AU's engagements in violent conflicts at the level of 'violent crisis' (level 3), 'limited war' (level 4) and 'war' (level 5). As indicated in Graph 1 below, the AU was involved through diplomatic interventions, mediation or peace support operations, or a combination of those, in 97% of the total number of violent conflicts analysed between 2013 and 2015. Besides the PSC, the AU intervenes in violent conflicts through the Chairperson of the AU Commission, through Special Envoys appointed by the Chairperson, through the Chairperson of the AU Assembly, through the Panel of the Wise, as well as other temporary and conflict specific channels, for example the African Union Commission of Inquiry for South Sudan (AUCISS) and the African Union High Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

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[55]   Our research focused on violent conflicts, using the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer index, where violent conflicts range from levels 3 to 5, with 'Violent crisis' (Level 3), 'Limited war' (Level 4) and 'War' (Level 5). Conflicts at lower levels (Dispute, Level 1 and Non-violent Crisis, Level 2) were not taken into account when assessing the impact of AU and REC/RM interventions. However, dedicated research as regards preventive measures and their potential impact on de-escalating emerging conflicts did look at conflicts below levels 3-5, notably at the level of non-violent conflicts.

Graph 1: Involvement of the AU in violent conflicts, compared with involvement of both the AU and REC/RMs
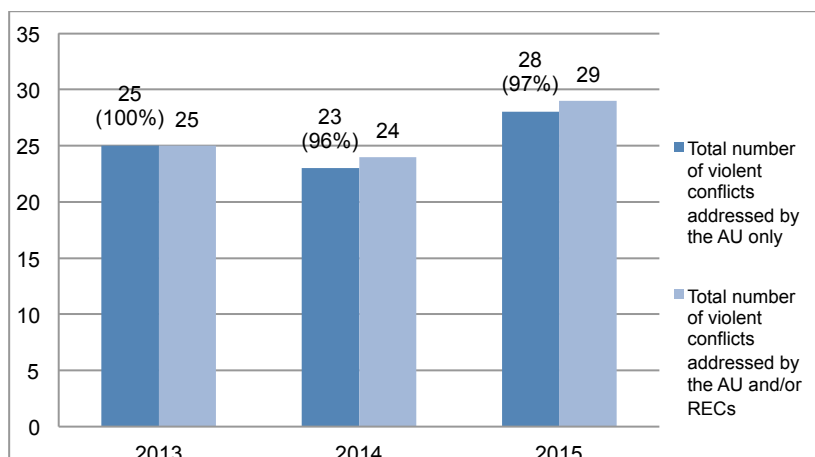
Graph 2 below indicates that the AU and REC/RMs have increasingly combined efforts over the years 2013 to 2015 when addressing violent conflicts. Such a combination of AU and REC/RMs efforts happens primarily through diplomacy and mediation instruments as we will discuss further below (section 4.3). The AU was the only regional actor in 11 of the 25 violent conflicts monitored in 2013, and in five of the 25 violent conflicts in 2014. In 2015, the AU's engagement as the only actor slightly increased again, as it was the only regional actor in 8 of the 29 violent conflicts. The AU and RECs jointly intervened in 14, 18 and 20 violent conflicts in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively.[56] This shows a rather fluctuating picture as regards the AU's role as the only actor, but nevertheless shows a moderately growing trend towards increased coordination between the AU and REC/RMs (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: Combination of AU and REC/RM interventions 2013-2015
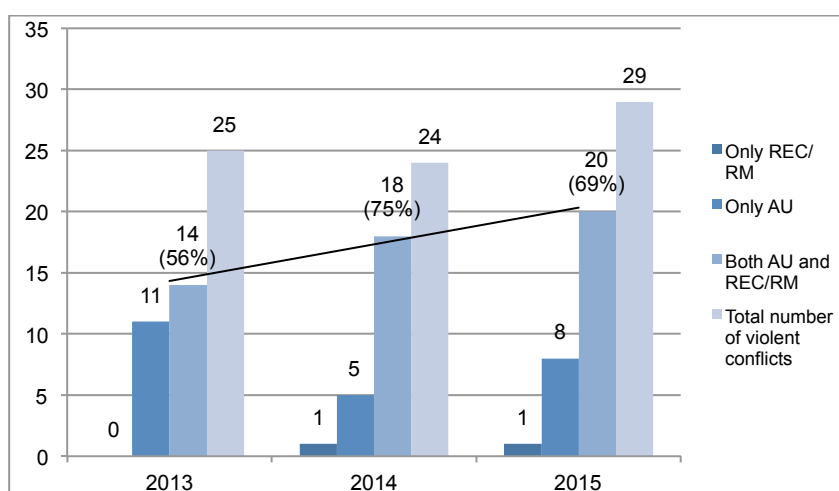
Key message 2: The AU and REC/RMs and international partners have developed a variety of cooperation models to strengthen coordination and joint efforts towards a number of highly intense conflicts, the results of which are mixed.

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[56]   The AU was not involved in Lesotho in 2014 (where SADC was the only regional actor) and in Niger in 2015 (where ECOWAS addressed the escalation of tension at the end of the year).

There is no single conflict situation where the AU or RECs are the only actors and there is a wide array of cooperation models between the AU and REC/RMs and external partners (see Box 5). The EU Peace and Security Committee and AU Peace and Security Council hold annual joint consultative meetings on most pressing issues in peace and security. The EU is one of the APSA's main external funders, through the African Peace Facility (APF). The APF was set up in 2004 in the context of the Africa-EU Partnership on Peace and Security, following the 2003 EU-Africa Summit in Maputo, and has its legal foundations in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.[57] The United Nations is a key partner, with linkages to various components in the APSA structure, facilitated by the UNOAU in Addis Ababa, which was established in 2010. The United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security also hold similar yearly consultative meetings, going beyond discussions as regards peace support operations. These annual meetings have shown to be important moments to discuss a set of issues and give an indication of shared priorities, but cooperation extends beyond this high level meeting. Other partners with whom the AU regularly consults are the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).[58]

Box 5: Illustration – Cooperation between the AU, REC/RMs and the United Nations and European Union

As regards to mediation and preventive diplomacy, the AU and REC/RMs have increasingly established International Contact Groups (ICG) to coordinate efforts and issue joint political statements, including with international partners. A number of prominent and highly intensive conflicts were jointly tackled by a wide variety of cooperation models. In the Central African Republic, an International Contact Group for the CAR (ICG-CAR) coordinated regional and international efforts. To address the challenges of the on-going conflict in Mali, regional and international efforts in the Sahel are coordinated under the Ministerial Coordination Platform. In the Great Lakes region, the AU, various REC/RMs and the United Nations jointly tackle the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and in bordering areas, under the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework. Both the AU and UN have special envoys for the Great Lakes. In Darfur, the AU and UN are jointly present through a hybrid peace operation, African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In Somalia, cooperation between the UN and the AU's largest peace support operation, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), happens through extensive cooperation between the UN special envoy for Somalia and AMISOM's Head of Mission.

In Libya, the AU supported mediations led by the United Nations in a less institutionalised manner, but nevertheless attended and supported all regional coordination meetings. As regards to Boko Haram, working-level coordination between the AU, regional organisations, and the EU and UN took place during meetings of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). For example in 2015, experts and advisers from the EU and the United Nations attended coordination meetings of the LCBC, AU and ECOWAS in preparation for the establishment of the MNJTF and supported the development of the MNJTF's Concept of Operations (CONOPS). In Burundi, mediation efforts were joined up through the Joint Facilitation Team, while in South Sudan, the IGAD mediators invited several international partners to the IGAD-Plus Group to enhance pressure on the warring parties over the course of 2015. Also in less violent conflicts, such as in Burkina Faso, an international contact group (*International Support and Follow Up Group for Transition in Burkina Faso, GISAT-BF)* was established.

With regards to peace support operations specifically, the UN-AU partnership includes consultative meetings, desk-to-desk reviews, joint mechanisms, and common field deployments.[59] This collaboration between the AU and the UN has resulted in a number of different cooperation models, including, amongst others, so-called hybrid forms of collaboration (for example the UN expands and absorbs a mission initially led by the AU, as was the case in Darfur), sequenced operations (whereby an AU-led mission transitions into a UN mission) as well as new joint systems and structures to improve cooperation.[60]

The EU support for AU peace support operations is channelled through the African Peace Facility (APF, see also box 6). Since its establishment, €1.9bn has been channelled through the instrument. One of the APF's main pillars is financing the African-led peace support operations (PSOs). The bulk of the APF's funding (90%) has been spent on PSOs, and most of this amount has gone to provide troop stipends for AMISOM. In an effort to re-balance the

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57   Deneckere and Knoll (2016).
58   The Arab League, formally the League of Arab States, is a regional organisation of 22 Arab countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, based in Cairo, Egypt. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has a membership of 57 states, founded in 1969, based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
59   Vanheukelom (2016).
60   Lotze (2015).

allocation of funds and increase support the other pillars of the APF (support for APSA structures, capacity-building and early warning and mediation activities), the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission announced to gradually reduce the share of APF funding for PSOs to 65%.[61] Since the launch of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020, additional funding has been released for the implementation of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020 under the APF and aligns itself with the five strategic priorities of the Roadmap.

In general, we found that a significant level of alignment between the AU and RECs and its international partners contributed to a higher level of intensity and quality of engagement in a specific conflict. These International Contact Groups and other formats have been aimed at avoiding duplication of efforts, but are no panacea as regards aligning the course of action between regional and international actors in a specific conflict.

The example of Burundi shows that initially the efforts of the EAC, the AUC, the Panel of the Wise and COMESA-EAC Elders were fragmented, and only later coordinated through the International Facilitation Team (comprising the EAC, the ICGLR, the AU and the UN, but not COMESA). This 'trusted' mechanism, however, did not contribute to an alignment of positions on Burundi between the various actors. In Somalia, despite the intense and on-going cooperation between the UN, AU and the EU in the country, partners seem to increasingly disagree as regards the pace of the exit strategy for AMISOM and the financial contributions for the mission.[62] In 2015, a joint benchmarking exercise was held to assess the progress made by AMISOM, which was deemed insufficient. At the same time AMISOM faced a mounting funding gap, and the decisive defeat of al-Shabaab remained elusive.[63] With decreased contribution from the EU to AMISOM as of January 2016, several troop-contributing countries suggested they would withdraw their contingents, while AMISOM publicly criticised the EU's decision and called upon the international community to close the funding gap.[64]

A more positive example could be observed in Libya in 2015. Despite the difficult situation and a high-intensity conflict, the cooperation and coordination between the UN and the AU gave the UN a facilitating environment and contributed to the signing the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) on 17 December 2015. The AU Special Envoy for Libya supported the UN-led peace talks by undertaking complementary consultations with Libyan stakeholders, including across the region, while the AU Assembly expressed its full support to the UN-led talks. Regional and international partners met during regional meetings of Libya's neighbouring countries organised by Chad and as part of the International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L). While the future of the agreement is unclear and progress as regards its implementation is slow[65], the modality of cooperation between the UN and regional actors proved overall successful.

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[61] Deneckere and Knoll (2016).
[62] Williams and Hashi (2016).
[63] ISG (2016).
[64] Williams (2017).
[65] Security Council Report (2017)

4.2.   Pragmatic approaches to subsidiarity and divisions of labour between the AU and REC/RMs

Key message 3: *Unresolved issues of subsidiarity contribute to variable decisions about the division of labour between the AU and REC/RMs.*

The APSA has offered an overarching framework for increased interaction and coordination between the AU and REC/RMs, building upon the experiences, proximity and institutions of the various RECs as building blocks of the APSA. The issue of subsidiarity has not been resolved despite increased, or rather increasingly formalised, interaction, coordination and dialogue between the AU and RECs (see also section 2.1). As a result, the AU and/or RECs apply a pragmatic approach to subsidiarity and comparative advantage, with an accompanying division of labour informed by political, financial and logistical realities, and the role of external actors.

A recent example of how a pragmatic approach to subsidiarity shapes the division of labour between the AU and RECs was the response by the AU and IGAD to the outbreak of violence in South Sudan in late December 2013. In March 2014, the PSC, meeting at the level of heads of state, appointed an African Union Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations and other abuses committed in South Sudan since mid-December 2013, to be headed by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.[66] Already in December 2013, the IGAD's Council of Ministers, under the Chairmanship of Ethiopia, had appointed a team of Special Envoys to mediate the conflict.[67] Throughout 2014 and 2015, the Team of Special Envoys stayed heavily involved and was backed by the IGAD Council of Ministers, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the IGAD Troika (the United Kingdom, Norway and Italy) and other external partners, such as China. Beyond the need to find a peaceful resolution for the conflict in the country, there was a strong call for an investigation into the human rights abuses, which occurred during the outbreak of violence in December 2013.[68] IGAD would have faced challenges in conducting a human rights investigation, given the role of the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) and President Museveni's personal support for President Salva Kirr.[69] This partisanship, as perceived by experts, would have compromised the neutrality of IGAD and the ability to find some level of consensus given the sensitive nature of the issue.[70] Hence, the AU became the leading actor to investigate the human rights abuses in South Sudan.

How the unresolved issue of subsidiarity and a pragmatic approach leads to a variety of institutional mechanism to address violent conflicts is also reflected in a number of examples of conflict situations where the AU and REC/RMs have deployed peace support operations. This includes the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNTJF) revived by the countries of the Lake Chad region and Benin (we discuss this further down in Box 12), and the regional cooperation initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (see Box 6), where hybrid solutions were sought to effectively eliminate terrorist groups.[71]

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[66]   AU (2014).
[67]   IGAD (2013).
[68]   Human Rights Watch (2014).
[69]   Bereketeab (2015).
[70]   Ibid.
[71]   The situation in Mali and ensuing interventions by ECOWAS and the AU would be an example where high tensions occurred, both between AU and ECOWAS and between the UN and the AU. After the transition of AU missions to the United Nations in Mali as well as in the Central African Republic, the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) led a lessons-learned exercise, which was conducted in consultation with the AU, ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) between November and December 2014. See UN (2015).

Box 6: Illustration – Comparing AU-led peace support operations: the LRA and Al-Shabaab

In August 2009, the African Union Assembly called upon countries of the region affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to renew efforts to neutralise the LRA. There had been prior regional efforts, but the willingness of countries previously leading the efforts to tackle the LRA, including Uganda and the Democratic Republic (DRC), had declined.[72] As there was no regional organisation in the central Africa region with sufficient legitimacy and geographic regional coverage to effectively engage with all countries involved in this regionalised conflict, a solution was sought at the level of the African Union. The ministers of defence and security of Uganda, CAR, DRC and representatives from South Sudan jointly proposed to tackle the LRA problem through a regionally coordinated initiative, including a coordinated military force and the appointment of an AU Special Envoy. While some conflict-affected countries in the region had hoped for an AU "mandated" regional peace operation, the AU settled for "authorising" a peace operation, and established the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA) in November 2011. Unlike with a mandated operation, an authorised operation does not provide for reimbursement by AU funds of the troop-contributing countries, which can act as a disincentive for such countries. Under the RCI-LRA, the military operations are coordinated through the Regional Task Force (RTF), as separate part of the RCI-LRA. The participating countries jointly appoint the senior Force Commander of the RTF and provide the military personal for the RTF. The Chairperson of the AU Commission appointed an AU Special Envoy for the Issue of the LRA in 2012. The Special Envoy oversees the implementation of the RCI-LRA's mandate, coordinates and mobilises overall support for the mission, but has no direct political leadership over military operations.[73] Reimbursement for troop-contributing countries depends on the decisions of troop-contributing countries' governments. But in the case of the RCI-LRA, the decision to launch the mission as an AU peace operation facilitated coordination between the LRA-affected states and opened the way for additional funding, including from the EU and United States.[74]

By comparison in Somalia, where the AU mandated the deployment of African-led African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), the situation is quite different in terms of political oversight and funding for troop-contributing countries. AMISOM is headed by a civilian Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson (SRCC) for Somalia, appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission. The Chairperson also appoints the force commander who operates under the political leadership of the SRCC of AMSIOM. The SRCC is double-hatted, in the sense that the SRCC operates as the representative of the AUC Chairperson and as the head of the mission, which has political (civilian and police) and military components and activities. In the case of AMISOM, the political and military leadership are more integrated than in the case of the RCI-LRA and the RTF, an AU-authorised operation. The African Union funds AMISOM from a variety of sources, including AU member states, the AU Peace Fund, the UN Trust Fund for AMISOM (and, later, the Somali National Army), the UN Trust Fund for Somali Transitional Security Institutions, UN assessed peacekeeping contributions, and a range of AU/AMISOM partners, including the EU.[75] This variety of funding leads to some institutional complexity, for example between the AU and the EU, which has committed nearly €1.05bn to financially support AMISOM under the African Peace Facility (APF, see also box 5) between 2007 and September 2016. According to Williams (2017), the process of transferring this amount in periodic tranches between two large international organisations involves multiple layers of bureaucracy.[76] Troop-contributing countries for AMISOM subsequently receive reimbursement from the African Union through their national central banks and governments. The contribution from the EU for AMISOM troops is aligned with the standard UN reimbursement rate ($1,028), but administrative fees from the governments of troop-contributing countries varies. This means that several cases (African soldiers who are part of AU-led PSO's) do not receive the full reimbursement, and there are considerable differences between troop-contributing countries. For example, in the case of Kenya Defence Forces, the government deducts an administration fee of $200, meaning a soldier takes home $828 every month.[77] This has been an issue as regards the funding from the EU, as the financing agreement with the AU for AMISOM stipulates that beneficiaries of the funds shall be exactly documented and reported. This has not been the case and has been criticised by the EU Court of Auditors (ECA).

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[72]   After years of military involvement by Ugandan troops, the political will to focus on the LRA gradually waned after the military operation in 2008. The government in Kinshasa in its turn was initially less interested in resolving the LRA problem on its territory or cooperating regionally as the LRA activities in the eastern part of the country were far removed from the political capital. As such, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was concerned about the presence of Ugandan troops on DRC territory and denied them access or asked them to leave the territory, following previous abuses by Ugandan military in the DRC. See Vanheukelom (2016).

[73]   Vanheukelom (2016).

[74]   Hull Wiklund and Ingerstad (2015).

[75]   Williams (2017).

[76]   Ibid.

[77]   Daily Nation (2016).

The comparison of these two missions shows that there are significant differences in the way AU-led peace missions are conducted in Africa. The setup and financing of these missions vary widely as well, and both missions have encountered various obstacles in terms of political leadership and funding. Some experts have noted that lack of funding within the AU and sub-regional organisations to finance operations has transferred responsibility for the costs of deployments to the troop-contributing countries. This has had negative effects on force generation and timely deployment, and has also made the missions highly dependent on support from donors and partners.[78] But it has also driven the AU, REC/RMs and external partners to find creative solutions to respond to threats in Africa. In the case of the RCI-LRA, for example, Dersso (2014) notes that it has been a unique experiment in finding a viable solution to respond to a cross-border security threat.[79] Some of the financial and logistical shortcomings of the RCI-LRA have been responded to by setting up structures to facilitate the mobilisation of support and cooperation with UN and other external partners.[80]

The unresolved issue of subsidiarity and comparative advantages in a peace and security context where political objectives of the affected countries may shift, or where the intensity of a conflict fluctuates, means that political priorities are not static. As a result, the AU and REC/RMs constantly assess the division of labour that is best fit to address the situation at hand, in line with these political priorities.

Key message 4: Where coordination and alignment of activities by the AU and REC/RMs is relatively high, the likelihood for effectiveness of AU and REC/RM intervention increases, but is not guaranteed.

The division of labour between the AU and REC/RMs is not always explicit and at times takes place in parallel efforts to national and local conflict prevention and resolution efforts. A number of elements can indicate a level of coordination and alignment[81] but these are no guarantee for more effective results in de-escalating or resolving the conflict. Three examples (Burkina Faso, Guinea and The Gambia) discussed in box 7 below show a mixed picture of how the AU and REC/RMs coordinated efforts in responding to violent conflicts, and to what extent and how these efforts contributed to a de-escalation of the conflict.

Box 7: Illustration – Coordination and alignment of AU and REC/RM activities

In Burkina Faso, efforts by the AU and ECOWAS succeeded in de-escalating tensions after a coup d'état, but there was a lack of alignment and coordination. In September 2015, the interventions and actions taken by the African Union were welcomed by parts of the Burkinabé civil society as more principled in its stance towards the coup-plotters, while ECOWAS was seen as too complacent in its dealings and mediation towards the reinstatement of the interim government.[82] The AU PSC decided to suspend the participation of Burkina Faso from all AU activities and threatened to adopt sanctions during its meeting on 18 September, two days following the attempted coup d'état.[83] On 22 September, an extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority equally strongly condemned the events, but requested the AU and international community forgo imposing sanctions.[84] In this context, four ECOWAS members of the PSC took contradictory decisions, first as part of the PSC and then as ECOWAS, in the space of four days. According to experts, the AU's principle stance gave it increased credibility among ordinary citizens in Burkina Faso and "reinforced the determination of the civil society to push for the status quo ante".[85]

A different example can be found in Guinea. Ahead of the elections scheduled in the country in October 2015, AU and ECOWAS were strongly aligned and were successful in accompanying the elections with potential electoral violence. The combined effort of the AU and ECOWAS was helped by an early engagement before the elections.

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78   Hull Wiklund and Ingerstad. (2015).
79   Dersso (2014).
80   Vanheukelom (2016).
81   This includes, amongst other, a joint assessment of the situation by the AU and REC/RMs, a similar level and intensity of engagement towards a conflict, examples of explicit support for each other's actions and joint declarations, (high-level) visits, meetings or mediation efforts.
82   ISS (2015a).
83   AU (2015c).
84   ECOWAS (2015b).
85   ISS (2015a).

Both the AU and ECOWAS were aligned in underlining the need for a political solution to the crisis, and implemented these messages through high-level delegations to the country as well as Election Observation Missions (EOMs), both short and long-term.

But joint messages are no guarantee for a sustainable solution. In the run-up to the inauguration of the president-elect Adama Barrow of The Gambia, the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations joined efforts to persuade former President Jammeh to step down and allow a peaceful transition. This came as troops from five West African nations[86] assembled along the borders of Senegal and The Gambia, while ECOWAS mediators issued an ultimatum to former president Jammeh.[87] A joint declaration on 21 January by the AU, ECOWAS and the UN commended "the goodwill and statesmanship" of the former President Jammeh and his decision to transfer power.[88] But despite these joint efforts, which possibly avoided a more violent confrontation between the troops, former President Jammeh and his remaining supporters, there is no guarantee for a sustained peace in The Gambia. The agreement, brokered by ECOWAS and supported by the AU and UN, was criticised for its apparent impunity towards Jammeh's reported human rights abuses under his rule which could lead to renewed unrest.[89]

The examples in Box 7 above highlight that mere involvement of both the AU and REC/RMs in a violent conflict are no guarantee for a coordinated approach. When the AU's and REC's activities are effectively coordinated and aligned through joint messages, coordinated mediation and by avoiding contradicting decisions at the various regional levels of decision-making, this contributes to a more successful and sustainable de-escalation of the conflict. When such alignment is missing, more efforts have to be spent in finding a viable formula to de-escalate the conflict.

4.3.   A variable use of APSA instruments, informed by different levels of violence

Key message 5: Over the period 2013-2015, the AU and REC/RMs increasingly used a combination of their respective diplomacy and mediation instruments to address conflicts.

Based on calculations from available research material, in two-thirds of all conflict situations over the period 2013-2015 the AU and REC/RMS intervened through one or a combination of instruments, regardless of the level of intensity of these conflicts. This could be diplomacy or mediation, diplomacy and a PSO, or diplomacy, mediation and a PSO.[90] A combination of these instruments should be expected, yet it is notable because it has increased steadily over the period 2013-2015.

As Graph 3 below indicates, the combination of instruments increased between 2013 and 2015 from 32% to 40% and 44% respectively in dealing with violent conflicts. The most common combination is diplomatic interventions (meetings of the PSC, other high-level meetings) and mediation efforts (for example through shuttle diplomacy or mediation led by a special representative). The combination of diplomacy with a PSO, or a combination of all three instruments, has remained relatively stable in the past years. The combination of diplomacy and mediation is also commonly used during election periods, which was especially the case in 2015 with a relatively higher number of elections taking place across the continent.

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[86]   Nigeria, Mali, Togo, Ghana and Senegal. The Guardian (2017).
[87]   _Gambia crisis: Senegal troops poised at border as Jammeh mandate ends_. The Guardian (2017).
[88]   Joint Declaration by the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the United Nations on the Political Situation of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia, 21 January 2017.
[89]   What's in Blue (2017).
[90]   The combination of just mediation and a PSO did not occur over the period 2013-2015.

Graph 3: Various combinations of instruments by the AU and REC/RMs, 2013-2015
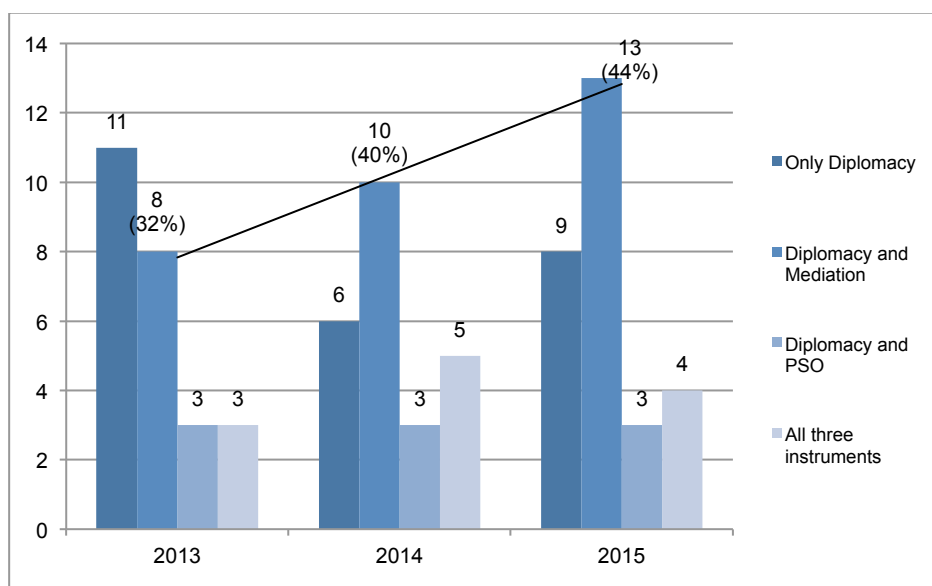
In a reverse trend compared to the increased combination of diplomacy and mediation, diplomacy as the only instrument used in AU and REC/RM interventions has declined steadily. Most of the conflicts where only diplomatic interventions were applied, were of more limited effect and of rather low quality, most often in cases where the AU (and sometimes REC/RMs) responded to attacks by violent jihadist groups through official statements, for example when the AU and RECs condemned terrorist attacks in Egypt and Tunisia. In places where more elaborate conflict response and management mechanisms are already in place, such as Somalia or areas affected by Boko Haram or the LRA, diplomatic statements, such as condemning terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab, have little effect on the conflict. Rather, these function as a way to signal political support to the ongoing efforts by AU and REC/RMs.

Only in a limited number of interventions by the AU and REC/RMs in violent conflict situations, there is a combination of all three instruments, namely diplomatic interventions, mediation efforts and peace support operations. A number of examples are outlined in box 8 below.

Box 8: Background – Examples of violent conflicts where a combination of three instruments were used

Possibly, more offensive and military measures are taken when mediation efforts are not, or no longer, viable. This has been the case in the offensive against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under the Regional Coordination Initiative against the LRA (RCI-LRA) or in Somalia against Al-Shabaab through the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Such PSOs are always accompanied by political interventions (diplomacy) and, if possible, mediation activities.

There are some examples where three instruments were and are combined, including Mali, Sudan and Somalia. In Mali negotiations were taking place with some of the armed groups in Northern Mali in 2013, while the AU was present with a peace support operation in the country. Also in Darfur, negotiations take place with opposition groups and the government, alongside the AU's contribution to the hybrid mission co-led with the United Nations, UNAMID. In Somalia, mediation efforts are undertaken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations (UN) and the AU, as part of the wider federalisation process and the establishment of federal entities across the country. In Somalia, the AU deploys its largest peace support operation.[91]

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[91] There has been some criticism as regards the nature and scope of mediation efforts by IGAD, as some experts have noted that the mediation efforts of IGAD are limited to certain areas of closely bordering Ethiopia, in a context where Kenya and Ethiopia have been said to pursue foreign policy objectives in its interventions and activities as part of AMISOM in Somalia. See Mosley (2015).

Key message 6: _**The higher the intensity of violent conflicts becomes, the more likely interventions by the AU and REC/RMs become.**_

The number of violent conflicts[92] in Africa has stayed relatively stable over the past three years. Nevertheless, Africa (together with the Middle East) continues to be home to the highest number of wars compared to the rest of the world according to the 2016 Heidelberg Conflict Barometer. As described in the methodology (see Box 4), violent conflicts were indexed as follows: violent crises (level 3), limited wars (level 4) and wars (level 5). Overall, the overwhelming majority (or 71%) of violent conflicts in Africa monitored between 2013 and 2015 were violent crises (level 3). In comparison to the high prevalence of violent crises, close to 14% of violent conflicts were limited wars (level 4), while 15% were wars (level 5) (see average number and percentage of violent conflicts (levels 3-5) in Graph 4 below).[93]

**Graph 4: Average number and percentage of violent conflicts (levels 3-5) in Africa, 2013-2015**
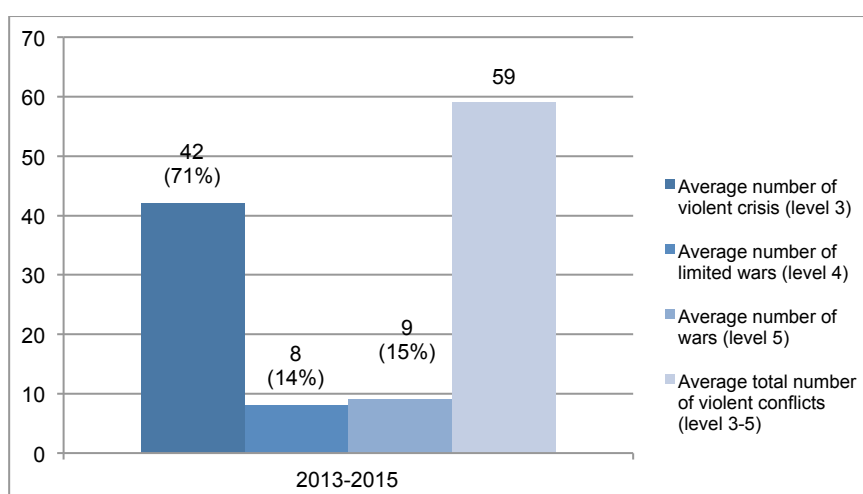

In terms of addressing these three levels of intensity of violent conflicts (levels 3-5), the AU and REC/RM are more likely to intervene in a violent conflict as the intensity of the conflict increases, though they do not intervene in all cases. As Graph 5 below shows, over the period 2013-2015, the AU and REC/RMs addressed 89% of all wars (level 5), compared to 50% of limited wars (level 4) and 33% of violent crises (level 3). In 2015, the number of violent crises (level 3) in which the AU and/or REC/RMs intervened increased slightly because of the many elections taking place across the continent. This included a number of countries which had seen violent conflicts in previous years, which were never before addressed by the AU and/or REC/RMs, including Nigeria and Ethiopia. These two countries held also elections in 2015 with the risk of electoral violence.

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[92]   As mentioned above, this research focused on violent conflicts, using the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer index, where violent conflicts range from levels 3 to 5, with 'Violent crisis' (level 3), 'Limited war' (level 4) and 'War' (level 5). Conflicts at lower levels ('Dispute (level 1) and 'Non-violent Crisis' (level 2)) were not taken into account when assessing the impact of AU and REC/RM interventions.

[93]   For the individual years, the number of violent conflicts was as following: 2013 had 40 violent crises (level 3), 8 limited wars (level 4) and 10 wars (level 5), hence a total of 58 violent conflicts. 2014 had 43 violent crises (level 3), 8 limited wars (level 4) and 9 wars (level 5), a total of 60 conflicts. 2015 had a total of 44 violent crisis (level 3), 8 limited wars (level 4), and 7 wars (level 5).

Graph 5: Average totals of violent conflicts addressed by the AU and REC/RMs and not addressed by the AU and REC/RMs, in comparison with total number of violent conflicts, 2013-2015
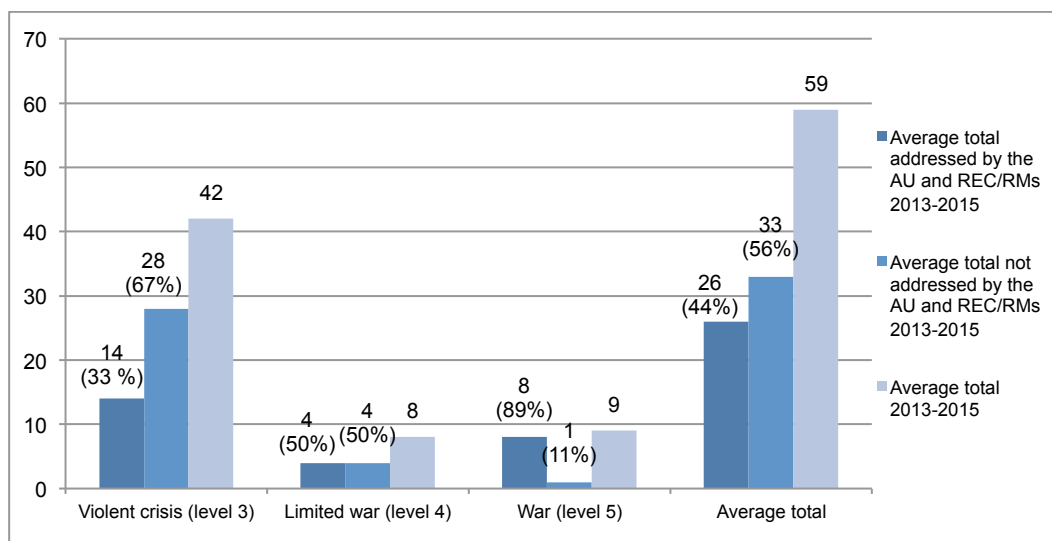
Graph 5 above also shows that the AU and REC/RMs did not intervene in 56% of the cases for violent conflicts (levels 3-5) over the course of 2013-2015. The possible reasons behind non-intervention by the AU and REC/RMs are explored in more detail in section 4.5 below.

4.4.   Expanding mediation and preventive diplomacy

Key message 7: Between 2013 and 2015, the involvement of AU and REC/RMs in mediation efforts in violent conflicts has increased. This has been particularly the case for the AU.

As Graph 6 below indicates, the involvement of AU and REC/RMs in mediation efforts in violent conflicts is growing, in particular for the AU. Since 2013, the AU became active in peace negotiations and mediation in a growing number of violent conflicts. In some violent conflicts over the past years, the AU was the only regional actor involved in mediation efforts. This was the case, for example, in Egypt, in the wake of the popular uprising and the Arab Spring, in the conflict around the Western Sahara, and in Libya. This partly relates to the absence of an active REC in the North African region (see also Box 3). Mediation efforts by the AU in these conflicts in Northern Africa should be qualified further. In Egypt, the AU mainly organised consultation meetings with the government and civil society in the wake of the Arab Spring, and members of the Panel of the Wise were initially not allowed into the country. In Libya, the AU supported the UN-led mediation. While the AU was thus not the main actor, it still played a supporting role through its Special Envoy for Libya (appointed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission). The efforts of the AU as regards the Western Sahara have intensified slightly in recent years, but with little result so far. In light of the recent re-admission of Morocco to the African Union in January 2017, the efforts towards the issue of the Western Sahara are currently in flux. Since January 2017, certain conference and meetings of the AU have been interrupted and postponed because of the attendance of Western Sahara and Morocco. For example, Morocco did not participate in a dedicated PSC session on the case of Western Sahara, as it does not acknowledge the AU's role in the Western Sahara.

In Sudan, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) has been intensely involved in mediation efforts and peace talks between the government, opposition groups and armed factions since 2009. While IGAD was also monitoring the peace talks, the AUHIP has been the most prominent regional actor. AUHIP has focused its mediation efforts both on the conflict between the government of Sudan and the armed groups in Darfur, the conflict between the political opposition and the government as part of the National Dialogue, and the situation in Abyei. In Mali, the AU has been supporting the Algeria-led peace process, notably since the appointment of the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel in October 2012.

__Graph 6: AU and REC/RM engagements in mediation efforts, 2013-2015__
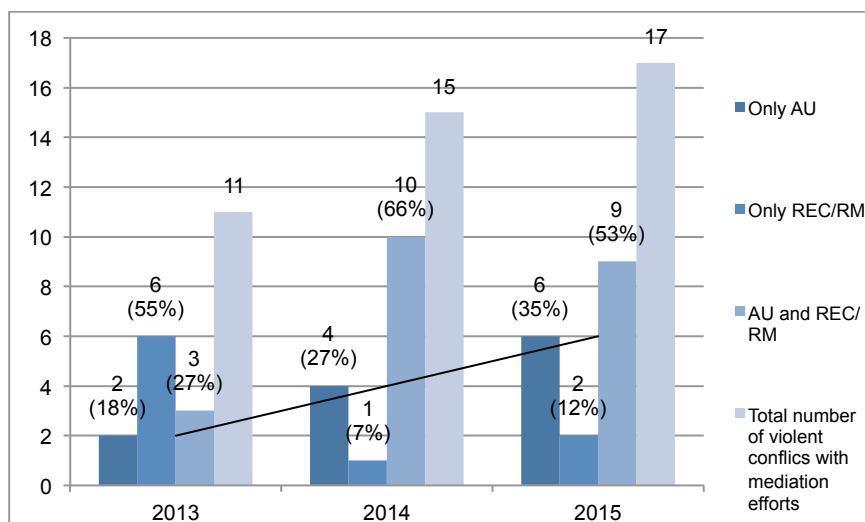
__Key message 8__: Between 2013 and 2015 the AU and RECs were involved in around 73% of peace processes where peace agreements were signed. In the bulk of such peace agreement processes, the AU and REC/RMs were rather supporting than leading actors.

The AU and REC/RMs are intensely involved in various mediation efforts across the continent. As Graph 7 below shows, in the period 2013-2015, around 73% of peace processes where peace agreements were signed, the AU and REC/RMs were involved. [94]

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[94]   Most peace agreements where the AU and RECs were not involved constitute of local, often clan-based agreements, prominent in Somalia, Sudan and Libya. Given the local and often more informal nature of these agreements, official documentation on these agreements, or evidence of AU and REC involvement in these is very sparse.

Graph 7: AU/REC involvement in peace agreements, 2013-2015
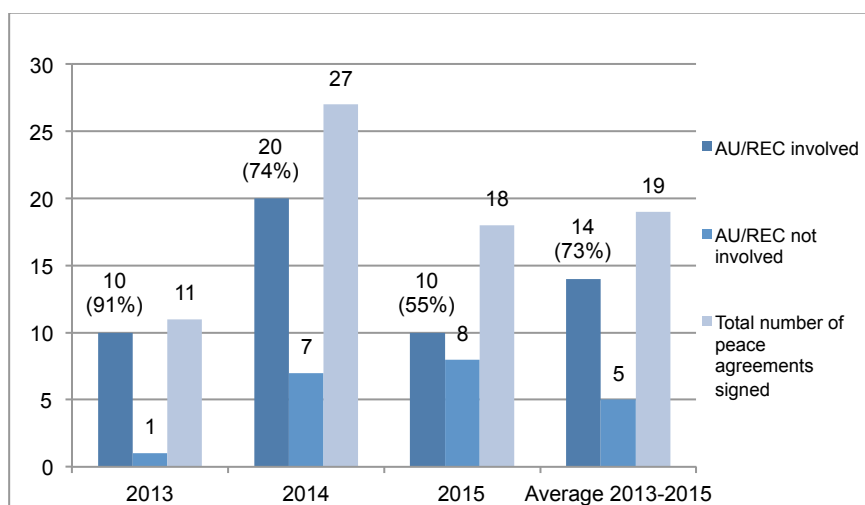
The involvement in mediation efforts by the AU and REC/RMs can take a wide array of forms. The AU or REC/RMs are not always leading mediation efforts. At times, the AU and REC/RMs focus on supporting mediation efforts by others, either regional actors, international actors such as the United Nations, or individual member states. A number of examples outlined in Box 9, from Libya, Mali and South Sudan, illustrate this diversity

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Box 9: Illustration – Varying modes of mediation efforts of AU, REC/RMs and international partners

In Libya, the AU's Special Envoy for Libya primarily supported the mediation efforts led by the United Nations, through participation and support to meetings with regional stakeholders (see also above under section 4.3). In Mali, the AU and ECOWAS relinquished their initial lead in the mediation talks during the political crisis in 2013 and 2014 and started to support the efforts led by Algeria as of mid-2014. The AU established the AU mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) in August 2013, following the transformation of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) into a UN mission in July 2013. Since then, the Head of MISAHEL, who is also the AU Special Representative in Mali, has provided political support to the Algerian-led peace talks. In South Sudan, the AU supported the IGAD-led mediation talks immediately following the outbreak of violence in December 2013. However, in an attempt to increase pressure on the warring factions, the AU welcomed the IGAD Plus+ formula, proposed by IGAD, where it joined the IGAD mediators, together with the EU, the UN, China and others (such as Norway, the United Kingdom, and Italy).

__Key message 9__: Election related missions have become a relevant instrument for preventive diplomacy by the AU and RECs in conflict-prone countries.

In general, political missions ahead of elections, such as pre-election assessment missions or so-called solidarity missions, contribute to the effectiveness of AU/REC diplomatic interventions. These missions add pressure to political actors in the country to conduct peaceful elections by signalling early engagement and scrutiny, and create additional opportunities and platforms for exchanges between various national political actors, and between national, regional (and international) actors. This was seen during the 2015 elections in Nigeria where the AU, ECOWAS and other international actors, such as the United Nations, complemented national efforts led by the Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Peace Committee and the Abuja Accord process. These combined efforts actively engaged national elites in the period leading to the elections. In general pre-election missions, often in congruence with existing national efforts, have become a platform for preventive diplomacy and mediation by the AU and RECs in countries where elections are taking place with a risk of electoral violence. In most cases, both pre-election missions and EOMs, both by the AU and REC/RMs, are headed by senior Africans (former political leaders, such as former presidents or ministers of foreign affairs) adding a level of political weight to any statements these EOMs release before, during or after elections.[95] In Box 10, some examples of the differences between pre-election missions and EOMs deployed by the AU and RECs in 2015 are given, showing some diversity between the political space, duration and general contexts for election related missions across Africa.

Box 10: Illustration – Comparing election related missions across Africa in 2015

Comparing the depth and width of election related missions deployed by ECOWAS and the AU in Guinea and the AU's EOM deployed in Ethiopia, both in 2015, suggests a narrower period for consultations allowed for in Ethiopia. That stands in contrast to Guinea, where ECOWAS' and the AU's early engagement in May,[96] July[97] and August[98] 2015 arguably contributed to the peaceful elections held in the country in November 2015. In addition to ECOWAS, Guinea also invited AU election monitors, while in Ethiopia the AU was the only external election observer[99], suggesting that it did not invite IGAD or other international or regional actors to observe the elections. The European Union declined to observe the election since it did not consider the environment conducive to hold peaceful and transparent elections.[100] Significant differences were also noticeable when comparing the election observation activities in Ethiopia and Nigeria, two large AU member states seen as hegemonic actors in their respective regions. The AU deployed EOMs that were relatively similar in size in both Nigeria and Ethiopia, despite significant differences in population.[101] However, in Nigeria, ECOWAS deployed a several election-related missions including a pre-election mission, including 12 long-term observers and 250 short-term observers, while IGAD was absent during the election in Ethiopia. It did not deploy either long or short-term observers, or a pre-election mission despite significant reports of intimidation, arrests and protests in the country. This absence was striking, given that IGAD did deploy an EOM to Sudan during the April 2015 elections.

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[95] Aggad-Clerx and Desmidt (2017).
[96] ECOWAS (2015a).
[97] ECOWAS (2015c).
[98] AU (2015d).
[99] AUEOM (2015).
[100] EU 2015.
[101] In Nigeria, the AU deployed an EOM with 14 Long-Term Observers (LTOs) and 70 Short-Term Observers (STOs) in 2015; while in Ethiopia, the AU deployed 9 LTOs and 50 STOs in 2015.

4.5. Balancing the principles of sovereignty and non-indifference

<u>Key message 10:</u> The decisions taken by AU Member States, whether at the level of the AU or in their respective REC/RMs, are heavily informed by national political objectives and interests, as AU Member States balance the principles of non-indifference and sovereignty.

AU Member States continue to underline (more or less explicitly) national and regional political objectives in the face of potential AU and/or REC interventions in their country. The principles of non-indifference and sovereignty continue to exist in the foundational documents of the AU and the APSA (see Box 11). In the face of a potential intervention by the AU or REC/RMs, AU member states strongly uphold the principle of sovereignty and protect their own national interests as well as regional political objectives.[102] Some observers have therefore noted a discrepancy between the AU's ambition to prevent and resolve conflicts, and the political capabilities to do so.[103]

Box 11: Background – Restraining and compelling factors for AU intervention

A closer look at the AU Constitutive Act and PSC Protocol is needed to understand some of the reasons why the AU does not intervene, most often in conflicts that have little potential for escalation or take place at the subnational level as opposed to national or regional conflicts. As mentioned above (see section 2), the AU Constitutive Act sets out a number of grave circumstances for which the AU and RECs should intervene. The PSC protocol too sets out a number of both compelling[104] as well as restraining factors for intervention. In theory, the PSC Protocol leaves us with a number of conflict situations in which intervention can be considered part of the mandate: 1. War crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; 2. Unconstitutional changes of government in a Member State; 3. When a Member State requests intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security, in accordance with Article 4(j) of the Constitutive Act; and 4. Where the national independence and sovereignty of a Member State is threatened by acts of aggression, including by mercenaries.[105] Some of the elements from the PSC Protocol which would restrain the AU tendency to respond to a certain conflict are the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States (Art. 4(e)) and the principle of non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another (Art. 4(f)). The restraining and compelling principles of the AU Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol are weighted against each other in deciding whether or not to address a conflict and in what form. To assess whether or not the AU should have intervened a close look at these restraining or supporting principles is key, and needs to be contextualised in political reality.

A closer look at the decision-making processes by the AU and REC/RMs in Burundi, and the fight against Boko Haram (see Box 12), highlights the difficult balance between the principles of non-indifference and sovereignty and shows that AU and REC member states are reluctant to set a precedent that goes against the political objectives and against the consent of a host state. Especially as regards military intervention (for example through a PSO) there is a strong tendency to uphold the principle of sovereignty and adhere to the consent of the host state to deploy a PSO in its territory. While diplomatic interventions and mediation efforts are less dependent on this consent, there are examples of it playing a role there too. For example, the deployment of an election related mission, as a diplomatic intervention, by the AU and REC/RMs in a country facing elections depends on the invitation, i.e. consent of the government.

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[102] Bouka (2016).

[103] ISG (2016b).

[104] A number of principles that could be compelling for the AU to respond to a certain conflict in its Member States include: the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts; early responses to contain crisis situations so as to prevent them from developing into full-blown conflicts; respect for the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedoms, the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law; respect of borders inherited on achievement of independence; the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; and finally, the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security. (Art. 4(a)(b)(c)(j) and (k) respectively).

[105] PSC Protocol, Article 7.

In theory, the AU and REC/RMs have the ability and the mandate to deploy the necessary instruments to respond to a wide variety of violent conflicts. In practice, the consent by recipient member states might be absent at times. It should be noted that peace support operations launched by the AU or RECs/RMs need authorisation by the United Nations Security Council prior to deployment (UN Charter, Chapter VIII, Art. 53) As the above examples also show, however, these elements of consent and authorisation by the UN are not static, and might fluctuate as the conflict situation escalates or expands. As a result, a member state might call for increased regional cooperation, or the AU or REC/RMs might gain more leverage on the stakeholders in the conflict. As such, the willingness and ability to deploy the instruments of the APSA is dependent on this balance between sovereignty and non-indifference.

Box 12: Illustration - National interests and balancing the principles of sovereignty and non-indifference: the examples of Burundi and Boko Haram

In 2015 in Burundi, the objection by the government of Burundi to deploy a 5,000 strong AU force through the EASF, despite the initial agreement in the PSC, was a clear rebuff of the principle of non-indifference. The escalation of tensions and violent incidents in Burundi initially prompted strong efforts by both the AU and the East African Community (EAC). According to experts, the AU PSC was proactive in its efforts, but constrained to hand over leadership to the EAC.[106] Tanzania, the EAC chair, and Uganda, the EAC-designated mediator, were also members of the AU PSC at the time, which provided a direct link between the two organisations.[107] But the AU as a whole was divided over the situation in Burundi and on the question of finding the balance between non-indifference and sovereignty. Many AU member states favoured a less confrontational and interventionist approach than the more proactive AU Commission and PSC.[108] The EAC too was divided according to experts: while Rwanda has criticised President Nkurunziza's management of Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania are seen as more favourable to maintaining the status quo. These differences between EAC member states paralysed the EAC's efforts.[109] The principle of sovereignty was not just underlined by the government of Burundi and certain members of the EAC, but also by other members of the PSC at the time, including The Gambia.[110] According to some observers, the decision-making process around the deployment of a mission in Burundi highlighted the lack of coherence between the AUC and the PSC, where the AUC was seen as having overstepped its boundaries.[111] Some AU member states felt the avenues of mediation had not been exhausted, and as such the proposal for a military intervention indirectly prompted new attention to the mediation efforts led by the EAC.[112] AU Heads of State and Government rescinded the December 2015 PSC's decision in January 2016, partially out of fear of setting a precedent and lack of consensus among AU member states.[113] Furthermore, the government of Burundi had made clear in December 2015 that it would not accept "foreign troops" in Burundi and would consider the proposed mission by the AU as an "invasion".[114]

In the fight against Boko Haram, member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the Republic of Benin decided to revive the dormant Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to coordinate the efforts to combat Boko Haram during an Extraordinary Summit in October 2014. Initially, the AU Assembly commissioned a study on the possible establishment of a Regional Task Force to combat Boko Haram, along the lines of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA).[115] Around the time where the AU PSC had its first meeting on Boko Haram in May 2014, regional coordination around Boko Haram was poor, mainly marked by ad hoc bilateral arrangements between Nigeria and its neighbours, while the regional bodies ECOWAS and ECCAS, as well as the AU, mostly treated the matter as an internal Nigerian issue.[116] Nigeria itself strongly advocated for this perception and understanding of the Boko Haram issue, projecting itself as a regional hegemon.[117] As a result of Nigeria's dominant military role in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, the Nigerian government framed conflicts within its borders as local issues that could be resolved by the country's institutions

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[106] ISS (2016).
[107] Ibid.
[108] ICG (2016b).
[109] Bouka (2015).
[110] Dersso (2016).
[111] ICG (2016b).
[112] Dersso (2016).
[113] Ibid.
[114] Reuters (2016).
[115] ISS (2014).
[116] Ibid.
[117] Warner (2016).

including the situation concerning Boko Haram. While it initially remained relatively confined within Nigeria's borders, the situation in the affected regions has amounted to a humanitarian crisis,[118] one in which an early response could have prevented it from developing in a full-blown crisis. The inclination by Nigeria to primarily frame the issue as a Nigerian affair is one of the reasons given by experts for Nigeria's delay in seeking international support from AU and other regional mechanisms in the fight against Boko Haram.[119]

__Key message 11__: The AU and RECs refrain from intervening in more than half of violent conflicts, for a variety of reasons.

In 2015, the AU and REC/RMs intervened in 29 violent conflicts and refrained from doing so in 31 other violent conflicts, meaning that the AU and REC/RMs addressed 48% of violent conflicts. In 2013 and 2014, the AU and REC/RMs intervened in 43% and 40% of violent conflicts, respectively. An overview of these figures is presented in Graph 8 below. In terms of intensity and potential for escalation, most of these violent conflicts not addressed by the AU and REC/RMs were 'violent crises' (level 3) and sub-national in nature, and only a limited number of them were 'limited wars' (level 4) or 'wars' (level 5) (see also section 4.3 above).

__Graph 8: Violent conflicts not addressed by AU and REC/RMs 2013-2015__
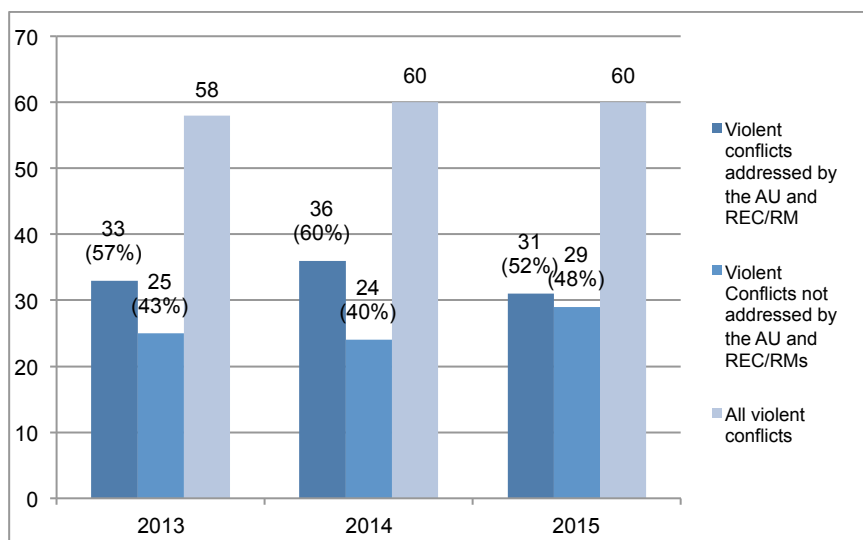
Potentially, there are various political reasons for a non-intervention by the AU and RECs. A state might be perfectly able to handle a conflict situation on its own. There might be little danger of further escalation across national borders, or there might have been a significant level of de-escalation in the conflict recently. Many violent conflicts monitored over the period 2013-2015 should be seen as mostly political conflicts where the protagonists are the incumbent government and opposition parties. In 2014, this was the case for example in Gabon, Togo, Niger, Uganda and Zimbabwe, amongst other conflicts. In 2015, this type of relatively low intensity, yet still with potential for violent escalation took place in Gabon, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Swaziland, Morocco, Chad, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In general, the AU and RECs have a tendency not to get involved in internal affairs, heeding the principle of sovereignty, if there is little potential for escalation. In many cases, interventions in these types of political conflicts happen in a more limited time frame around (contested) elections, through election related missions. At times, there are elements of inconsistency, as the example of Mozambique in Box 13 indicates. While the intensity of the conflict in Mozambique did not decrease, the intensity of engagement by SADC has fluctuated somehow.

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[118] Campbell (2016).
[119] Ibid.

Box 13: Illustration – Regional efforts to tackle the on-going conflict in Mozambique

The conflict in Mozambique was not addressed or discussed by the AU or relevant RECs, in this case the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), during 2015, while it was addressed in 2014, when elections were held in the country. But the situation in 2015 had not improved--on the contrary. The Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), the government's main political and armed opposition party, continued to reject the 2014 election results in 2015. Deaths of government troops and armed opposition reached approximately 45. In April, after a bill submitted by RENAMO to Parliament as regards the governance of the provinces failed to pass, undermining earlier peace talks in February 2015 by President Nyusi and Afonso Dhlakama, the party leader of RENAMO. As Dhlakama threatened to resort to force and take over control of Manica, Nampula, Niassa, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia provinces, fighting intensified in July, with over 700 civilians fleeing to Malawi, where already 10.000 Mozambican refugees resided.[120] Calls by Dhlakama for the secession of certain provinces of Mozambique from government and his claims that he will take control of these provinces in March 2016 fuelled tension and conflict.[121] While SADC or the AU could have addressed the growing intensity of the conflict, and the potential escalation toward Malawi, this did not happen. South African President Zuma, upon the request of RENAMO, agreed to mediate peace between the two opposing parties, stating that doing so was necessary to ensure stability in the region and continent[122]. However, this was not received favourably by the government, who felt it was not involved in the choice of President Zuma as a mediator. Even more, the choice of mediator was without any formal regional and continental backing by SADC and the AU nor any reference to their existing mediation structures.

Key message 12: *Regional powers and larger AU Member States tend to insulate themselves relatively more from AU and REC/RM interventions than smaller AU member states.*

Despite potentially solid arguments not to intervene in a violent conflict, larger AU member states remain relatively more insulated from diplomatic interventions, statements condemning a certain situation or escalation of conflict or mediation efforts. These dynamics take place both at the level of the AU and at the level of REC/RMs, but perhaps even more so in the latter. The role of these larger member states in their respective regions is often referred to as hegemonic, and in each of Africa's five regions certain member states play a more dominant role compared to others as regards peace and security and regional stability. Regional powers such as Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Egypt and Algeria[123], and other countries such as Kenya and Chad, have played important regional roles in setting the peace and security agenda and pushing for institutional arrangements to ensure implementation. This has included the provision or mobilisation of financial contributions, generating troops and logistical support for peace support operations, breaking deadlocks, ensuring diplomatic cover and political steer, as well as deliberating and imposing sanctions.[124]

A closer look at the percentage of non-intervention in the 10 largest African member states (termed here as the AU10) in Graph 9 below (based on nominal GDP) with violent conflicts over the course of 2013-2015,[125] suggests that violent conflicts in these larger AU Member States were not addressed as frequently by the AU or REC/RMs. The percentage for non-intervention in violent conflicts is consistently higher for the AU10 than for all AU member states, on average 63% for the period 2013-2015. The percentage for non-intervention by the AU and RECs in the AU10 is (significantly) lower for the year 2015, compared to previous years. As mentioned above (see section 4.3), the number of violent conflicts where the AU and

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[120] HIIK (2016).
[121] ECP (2016).
[122] SABC (2015).
[123] Cilliers et all. (2016).
[124] Vanheukelom (2016).
[125] Using the World Bank's ranking for GDP, the biggest 10 African economies over the period 2013-2015 *with* violent conflicts in their countries *and* members of the AU, comprised of the following countries for 2013: Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Angola, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tunisia and Côte d'Ivoire; for 2014 and for 2015: Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Tunisia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. For this selected database, Morocco was taken out of the list, as it was not a member of the AU during this period. While the AU has addressed the situation in the Western Sahara, the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer listed this conflict under Morocco. See: World Bank database.

REC/RMs intervened in 2015 was higher, partly because of the high number of elections taking place. As a result, the number of violent conflicts which the AU and REC/RMs addressed was pushed up, including in a number of countries where the AU and REC had previously not intervened, such as Ethiopia and Nigeria, members of the AU10.

Graph 9: Comparing non-intervention in violent conflicts in all countries, to all violent conflicts in AU 10, 2013-2015 (AU10)
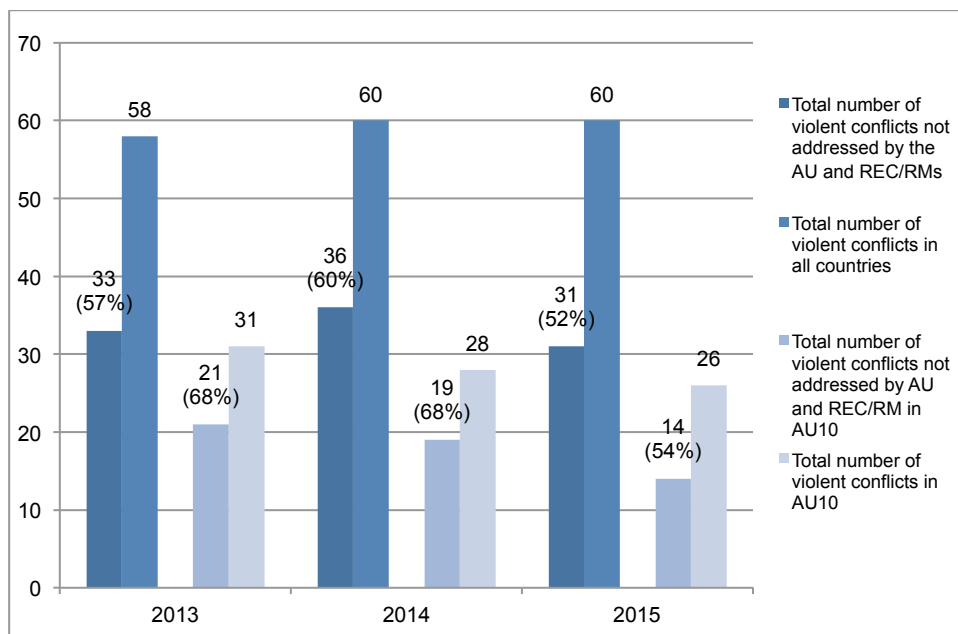
5. Conclusions

This analysis summarises the contribution of interventions by the AU and REC/RMs in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in violent conflicts across the African continent for the years 2013 to 2015. It looks beyond the operationalisation of the APSA structures for a limited period, which highlights some broad trends, supporting these with both qualitative and quantitative analysis originating from meticulous and extensive desk studies. Twelve key messages have been distilled from this wealth of information. Some of these confirm existing thinking or prior statements made by policy makers and practitioners, while others add new information or a different lens to existing knowledge.

The quantitative and qualitative findings confirm a general observation by APSA stakeholders and observers that the APSA has been a useful framework to promote peace and security across the African continent. Compared to other more established international frameworks, it is generally perceived as one of the most effective and far-reaching frameworks for cooperative interventions in peace and security. It is still in its adolescence and with good potential to further grow, mature and to be adapted to recent trends and challenges to peace and security on the continent. Recent discussions about intra-African sources of financing for the APSA confirm this. However, there are many instances where the APSA framework has been used rather ad-hoc, where potential synergies were not used and where AU member states' national priorities prevailed to an extent that the validity of some principles of the APSA were put into question.

The 12 key messages can be clustered into five broad trends and observations emerging from this period 2013 to 2015:

Coordination and cooperation: The analysis of this three-year period shows that the AU and REC/RMs have gradually increased their joint efforts when intervening in violent conflicts. This was in particular the case for joining diplomatic and mediation efforts initiated and executed either by the AU or the REC/RMs, or vice versa. In line with its Constitutive Act, the AU has addressed the overwhelming majority of violent conflicts on the continent, both through APSA's institutional elements as well as through ad-hoc and context specific channels.

Concerning the cooperation and coordination of efforts to address violent conflicts with international, i.e. non-African, partners, a variety of cooperation models to strengthen collaboration and joint efforts towards solving highly intense conflicts can be observed. Despite these varied models of cooperation, results have been mixed, displaying room for further improvement. Instances of fragmentation or lack of agreement between the AU and REC/RM and international partners undermine the potential for synergy and sustainable de-escalation of violent conflicts.

Subsidiarity and division of labour: Questions about subsidiarity, comparative advantages and division of labour between the AU and REC/RMs for addressing violent conflicts remain unsolved. Quite often, ad-hoc and pragmatic solutions are sought in the absence of clear or shared interpretation of agreements, but also in view of political conditions in AU Member States and between AU Member States at a given point in time. This has an influence on the quality and effectiveness of the APSA's application.

Where the coordination and alignment of activities by the AU and REC/RMs was relatively high, the likelihood for effectiveness of their intervention increased – however, given the unresolved question of subsidiarity, as discussed above, such coordination and alignment was not a guarantee for a sustainable solution or de-escalation of violent conflicts. While the AU and REC/RMs gradually increased their joint efforts, as mentioned above, the results of coordination and cooperation between the AU and REC/RMs often led to unsatisfactory outcomes due to this subsidiarity issue.

Use of APSA instruments: The AU and REC/RMs increasingly intervened through a combination of instruments, most commonly through mediation and diplomacy. Only in a limited number of cases, all three instruments, adding a peace support operation to diplomacy and mediation efforts, were deployed. In addition, the deployment of interventions and activities by the AU or the REC/RMs under the umbrella of the APSA was more likely for cases where the intensity of the violent conflicts increased, meaning that the overwhelming majority of high-intensity conflicts, including wars, has been addressed by the AU and REC/RMs. Nevertheless, on average, over half of violent conflicts on the continent were not addressed by the AU and REC/RMs, for a variety of reasons as highlighted below and further discussed in the analysis.

Expanding mediation and preventive diplomacy: For the period 2013 to 2015, findings show that the involvement of the AU and REC/RMs in mediation and preventive diplomacy in violent conflicts has increased. The AU's role, in particular, displayed a growing engagement. It can be further noted that the AU and RECs were involved at different levels of intensity in around 73% of peace processes where peace agreements were signed. In the bulk of such peace agreement processes, the AU and RECs were rather supporting than leading actors, supporting efforts and activities of national, other regional or international actors. In practice, the mediation efforts of the AU and REC/RMs thus take a variety of forms.

The analysis further highlights that election related missions have become a relevant platform for preventive diplomacy by the AU and RECs in conflict-prone contexts, especially when high-level pre-electoral missions are deployed in combination with short and long-term election observation missions. In most cases, AU and REC/RMs follow similar patterns and engagements towards elections (through pre-election and election observation missions) in violent conflicts.

Sovereignty and non-indifference: Decisions of AU Member States on how they position themselves vis-à-vis a violent conflict are heavily informed by national and regional political objectives. This takes place at the level of the AU (including through membership of the Peace and Security Council) as well as the level of REC/RMs. Not surprisingly, principles of non-indifference are often balanced, or traded, against principles of national sovereignty for which the AU Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol provide both some compelling as well as restraining factors.

In more than half of violent conflicts analysed, the AU and REC/RMs refrain from intervening. This happens for a variety of reasons, reflecting also the relative strength of AU Member States in particular regions and their ability to solve violent conflicts by themselves or among neighbours without wider APSA engagements. Other reasons are that the AU or a REC/RM has not been requested to intervene or that the AU or REC/RMs has seen little risk for an escalation of the violent conflict.

Finally, the specific role of regional powers and larger AU Member States has been particularly looked at and found to be an important element for assessing the probability, timing and opportunity for interventions and activities under the umbrella of the APSA. These larger AU member states tend to insulate themselves relatively more from AU and REC/RM interventions than smaller AU member states, suggesting that violent conflicts in smaller AU member states are more frequently addressed than violent conflicts of the same level in larger AU member states.

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