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AFRICA DEFENSE FORUM

CONTINENTAL COLLABORATION

Nations Establish New Alliances
to Tackle Shared Challenges

PLUS

A Conversation With Lt. Gen. John M. Omenda,
Vice Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces

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ON THE COVER

Images from peace support operations and military events show how the understanding of shared security is changing on the continent.

REUTERS AND ATMIS

A Swahili proverb says, “If a snake bites your neighbor, you too are in danger.” The meaning is clear: A community is safest when everyone is protected. This is as true for a village as it is for a continent.

In the defense realm, this concept is known as “shared security,” and its importance is illustrated all too often. When a country descends into chaos, it becomes a haven for extremists to launch attacks outward. When criminals find ungoverned spaces, they exploit them and destabilize the region. When a civil war shatters peace, it sends refugees fleeing across borders.

It all demonstrates that countries cannot remain insulated from the troubles around them.

Understanding this, African security professionals do not hesitate to intervene to help others. Whether serving in missions under the African Union, United Nations, regional economic communities or ad hoc coalitions, they are among the most experienced peacekeepers in the world. Eleven of the top 20 troop-contributing countries to U.N. missions are from Africa.

But the future of these missions is uncertain. The U.N. has faced stiff resistance to its missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. Both missions have announced they will end. The AU has persistent funding shortfalls. Logistics, including airlift capacity to move personnel and equipment into place and support troops in the field, is always limited. Finally, there is the challenge of building a durable peace. Although African-led missions have succeeded at military objectives like counterinsurgency, the ability to support a peace process or national reconciliation has proved more difficult.

African leaders now have the opportunity to capitalize on the lessons learned from past missions and the deep experience of peacekeepers. Countries have shown the ability to quickly assemble coalitions to intervene in threats ranging from electoral violence to disease epidemics. That adaptability and speed might be the greatest asset of African-led security interventions. Future models of peacekeeping will be uniquely adapted to African security challenges.

By investing in peacekeeping training and strengthening procedures that allow for quick interventions, African-led missions can more effectively restore peace. By prioritizing dialogue and addressing the underlying causes of instability, African nations can make sure that peace holds and the continent prospers.

U.S. Africa Command Staff



Kenya Defence Forces Soldiers prepare to board a plane after participating in the East Africa Community Regional Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. REUTERS



Shared Security

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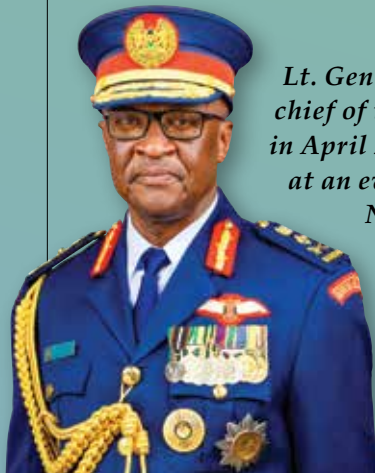
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‘One Force, One Mission’



Lt. Gen. Francis Omondi Ogolla became chief of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) in April 2023. He spoke October 14, 2023, at an event in Embakasi Garrison, Nairobi, to mark KDF Day. The theme was “One Force, One Mission: Enhancing National and Regional Security.” Ogolla’s remarks have been edited for space and clarity.



Lt. Gen. Ogolla died in a helicopter crash on April 18, 2024, 400 kilometers northwest of Nairobi. The president declared three days of national mourning as Ogolla was remembered for 40 years of service to the country as a fighter pilot, commander of the Kenya Air Force, vice chief and then chief of the KDF.



Each year, this day serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit of our Soldiers, Airmen

and Sailors. Our observance of KDF Day is not a recent tradition. It holds a deep-rooted significance in our national memory. The seeds of this commemoration were sown back in October 2011 when our Soldiers bravely launched Operation Linda Nchi [a military intervention in Somalia].

KDF Day was established, and has been observed annually, since October 2012. It serves as a reminder of the fortitude and commitment of our defense forces and their relentless pursuit of peace and security for our beloved nation.

In the face of adversity, a nation’s true strength emerges not from its weaponry or strategic prowess, but from its unity and shared sense of purpose. A little over a year ago, that unity was tested, and we grappled with a looming shadow stretching its arms toward our motherland: al-Shabaab.

Understanding the gravity of this threat, the three pillars of our defense forces — the army, air force and navy — converged, each bringing its unique strengths, but all united by a single mission. This seamless synergy was emblematic of our guiding

dictum: one force, one mission.

The objective was clear, to neutralize the al-Shabaab threat and secure our homeland’s security. Yet wars are never simple. And neither was this one. The journey was difficult and fraught with challenges. Our meticulous planning was met with unpredictability, our determination with resistance. But in every challenge, we found opportunity; in every setback, a lesson; and in every victory, renewed hope.

As we navigate this complex tapestry of global geopolitics and an ever-evolving security landscape, our commitment remains unshaken. We evolve, we adapt, but our core objective remains unchanged. Our eyes and ears are forever scanning the horizons ensuring that our strategies and capabilities are not just responsive, but proactive to any challenges to our national sovereignty.

In an era where the fog of war grows ever more complex and the theater of conflict becomes increasingly intricate, the bedrock of our esteemed military service remains its commitment to professionalism and ethical conduct. The Kenya Defence Forces, in its pursuit of national security and peace, holds these principles in the highest regard.

In this professional and ethical commitment is a foundation of underlying

Lt. Gen. Francis Ogolla visited Kenya Defence Forces troops serving in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia in Kismayo in December 2023. KENYA DEFENCE FORCES

dedication: dedication to our motherland, dedication to the ideals we stand for and dedication to the sacred trust placed upon us by the people of Kenya.

Throughout the records of history, the successes of any institutions, particularly a defense force, are not achieved in isolation. It is in a collaborative spirit and unwavering support of leadership that propels an organization toward achieving its goals. Today, I stand before you not just as a representative of KDF, but as a testament to the immense support and trust we have received.

To this, the dedicated members of our national government, our heartfelt gratitude knows no bounds. Your steadfast belief in our capabilities, your continued support and your commitment to our shared vision have been the driving force behind every maneuver, strategy and victory.

In a world full of complexities, where challenges evolve every day, our commitment remains steadfast and singular. Kenya Defence Forces, bound by duty, honor and love for our motherland, will continue to stand as an unbroken fortress, united in diversity, dedicated in our purpose.



AFP/GETTY IMAGES

BOTSWANA *Opens Forensic Laboratory to Combat Wildlife Crime*

ADF STAFF

A forensic laboratory in northern Botswana will play a vital role in disrupting the illegal wildlife trade, according to the lab's supporters.

"The forensic laboratory will scientifically investigate and prosecute wildlife trafficking crimes through interagency law enforcement support, and this will entail collection, storage and analysis of evidence," President Mokgweetsi Masisi said.

The laboratory is supported by a \$2.7 million grant from the United States State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Researchers at the Wildlife Forensic Laboratory in Kasane will work with wildlife experts at Virginia Tech university in the U.S. and the nongovernmental organization the Centre for African Resources, Animals, Communities and Land Use (CARACAL) based at nearby Chobe National Park.

"Botswana is becoming a wildlife haven, and, therefore, a target for traffickers," CARACAL founder Kathleen Alexander told ADF. Alexander, a wildlife veterinarian and Virginia Tech professor, has spent more than 30 years working with Botswana to protect its wildlife.

The Kasane laboratory will help Botswana and its neighbors prosecute wildlife crimes, Alexander

said. "It's important to develop faster and more effective measures to counter wildlife trafficking," she said.

Wildlife trafficking thrives on corruption, illicit financial flows and money laundering — factors that have made it a major market for criminal organizations in Asia and elsewhere. Illicit materials often are packed with legitimate cargo to be smuggled by sea to Asia.

It is crucial that wildlife crime investigations also consider the organized crime aspect, according to the Wildlife Justice Commission.

"Intelligence analysis is an essential tool in this regard," commission researchers wrote in a report. "Wildlife crime is a cross-cutting criminal activity which cannot be tackled in isolation from other crimes."

Successfully fighting wildlife crime requires international cooperation, Masisi said. The Kasane lab puts the Botswana-based researchers within easy reach of colleagues in Angola, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"The unyielding threats to our wildlife and their habitat call for innovative and proactive measures," Masisi said. "This facility will therefore become a critical hub in our collective efforts to protect the precious natural resources bequeathed to us."

Groups Educate, Empower Youth to FIGHT DISINFORMATION



Civic educator Owiny Hakim, front center, teaches young people in Uganda about the benefits of inclusive dialogue and the dangers of disinformation.

YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE

ADF STAFF

Growing up in internally displaced persons camps in northern Uganda in the 1980s, Hakim Owiny was surrounded by armed conflict and suffering, but the sting of disinformation stuck with him. Rumors spread that the people in the camps were violent, and those lies fueled more waves of violence, division and unrest.

Today, Owiny is a civic educator who works in his community to teach young people about the benefits of inclusive dialogue and the dangers of disinformation.

“Disinformation is one of the most destructive camouflaged lethal weapons among people living in the shadows of conflict and political instability,” he told the Young African Leaders Initiative. “When people are subjected to a perpetual state of worry about their lives, it creates fertile ground for mis- and disinformation to breed.”

Disinformation is rampant in the continent’s fast-developing media landscape. Experts such as Vanessa Manessong, who works with the technology and data journalism nonprofit Code for Africa, point to the harm it does to young people’s perspectives and engagement.

“Today, young people between 14 and 24 years of age are very present on social media, so they are more exposed to the risks of disinformation,” she said during a January 2024 online panel discussion hosted by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

Journalist Kunle Adebajo, who works with HumAngle Media based in Abuja, Nigeria, has documented extensive online activities by violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State-West Africa Province.

“We looked into how they use local languages and how they mix different languages to evade content moderation on various platforms,” he said during the panel discussion. “We realized that fact-checking disinformation or individual claims is not enough. Sometimes you only see one post in a larger disinformation network. When you attack that one post, there is still a Hydra-headed monster out there.”

In Ghana, Harriet Ofori works with nonprofit Penplusbytes to conduct public awareness campaigns, train journalists and teach media literacy. In 2023, more than 2,000 people participated in its workshops.

“Disinformation is like a disease that is not going away any time soon,” Ofori said during the webinar. “It keeps evolving, so it is very important that we vaccinate ourselves.”

WHO APPROVES Second Malaria Vaccine

ADF STAFF

The World Health Organization (WHO) in October 2023 approved a second malaria vaccine two years after it approved the first one. The move is expected to ease concerns about availability in Africa.

The R21/Matrix-M vaccine, developed by Britain’s Oxford University, will join the RTS,S/AS01 vaccine in preventing the mosquito-borne disease in children. Malaria kills hundreds of thousands of children each year.

“The addition of R21 to the list of approved shots is expected to result in sufficient supply to benefit all children living in areas where malaria is a public health risk,” the United Nations reported soon after the WHO decision.

“As a malaria researcher, I used to dream of the day we would have a safe and effective vaccine against malaria,” said WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of Ethiopia. “Now we have two.”

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa, said the shot “holds real potential to close the huge demand-and-supply gap. Delivered to scale and rolled out widely, the two vaccines can help bolster malaria prevention and control efforts and save hundreds of thousands of young lives in Africa from this deadly disease.”

Another advantage of the new vaccine is its low cost, which is between \$2 and \$4 per shot.

The vaccine was set to debut in some African countries, including Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria, in early 2024. It was expected to be available in other countries by the middle of the year, Tedros said.



A child gets a malaria vaccine as part of a pilot program for at-risk children in Kenya. A second vaccine has been approved. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



BUILDING AN AFRICAN MODEL FOR PEACE



African-Led Peace Operations Fill a Gap to Deal With Some of the Toughest Security Threats, But They Face an Uncertain Future

ADF STAFF

For decades, the United Nations was the primary institution overseeing peacekeeping missions in Africa. But the U.N. hasn't launched a new mission since 2014, and its missions in Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were forced to shut down amid rising insecurity and host-country resistance.

As the U.N. pulls back, African institutions are stepping up. The African Union and regional organizations oversee 10 peace operations with more than 70,000 men and women serving in 17 countries. In 2022, the AU matched its highest total of new missions by launching four peace operations.

Many observers now argue that the future of interventions on the continent will be African led. These missions, under the umbrella of African institutions and primarily staffed by African Soldiers, are, at their best, nimble, quick to respond and willing to aggressively engage enemies in ways U.N. missions are not.

"African-led PSOs [peace support operations] have demonstrated a wealth of experience, skills, capacity and knowledge despite the limited resources and funding," wrote Dr. Andrew Yaw Tchie of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs in an article for the journal *Global Governance*. "African-led PSOs are at a unique point to not only adjust and adapt, but also become a key asset in dealing with future instability and continue to plug in a gap which the UN PKOs have not been fully successful in doing."

African peacekeepers already are among the most experienced and battle-tested in the world. In 2000, African peacekeepers made up about 20% of all forces in U.N. missions. By 2020 that figure had grown to more than 50%.

But questions remain as to how the next generation of missions will be constructed and mandated. What types

of crises will they seek to address? Who will fund them? Can they work to resolve conflicts through dialogue? As leaders chart the path forward, a unique African model of how, when and where to intervene is developing.



A Burundian Soldier serving in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia keeps watch from an armored personnel carrier in Hirshabelle State. ATMIS

DIFFERENT SHAPES FOR DIFFERENT PROBLEMS

One advantage of the African-led missions is their versatility. There are large-scale missions mandated by the AU, like the mission in Somalia, which began in 2007 and included up to 20,000 troops. There also are smaller missions authorized by the regional economic communities (REC) like the 630-person Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervention in Guinea-Bissau formed to help stabilize the country after a coup attempt. Finally, there are ad hoc missions built out of a coalition of countries to address a shared threat such as terrorism or banditry. An example of this is the 10,000-person Multinational Joint Task Force composed of Lake Chad Basin countries in response to terrorism and crime.

South Sudan People's Defence Forces Soldiers prepare to deploy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of the East African Community's intervention. The mission is one of a growing number being launched by Africa's regional economic communities. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The AU's African Peace and Security Architecture guides these missions, but many are now fairly independent of the AU. As of 2023, only three of the 10 African-led peace operations were AU-mandated and supported financially and logistically by the AU. Others, like the South African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), are organized by a REC while operating under the framework of the AU's African Standby Force (ASF).

Observers say a move toward more local control of missions is a good thing. They say that regional bodies and neighboring countries have a greater stake in the outcomes than do peacekeepers from far away.

"When it comes to peace enforcement, the motivation of troop-contributing countries is key," Maj. Gen. Richard Addo Gyane, commandant of the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre, told ADF. "If something happens in Nigeria, I would rather go and fight because I know it could affect Ghana easily. There is something for me to fight for."

Similarly, these regional coalitions can be formed and deployed faster than those developed through a slow-moving bureaucratic process. The 2002 protocol establishing the ASF called for each region of the continent to be able to deploy an intervention battalion in 14 days. This urgency was necessitated by past acts of mass violence in which international intervention came too late to save lives.

Although the ASF structure is in varying levels of readiness, Dr. Cedric de Coning, a senior advisor to the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes and an expert on peacekeeping, said that speed should be one of the greatest assets of African-led peace operations. He said interventions have been most effective using a "just-in-time" model in which coalitions of countries are built to quickly intervene when a crisis breaks out.

Rwandan troops prepare to depart for Mozambique to help the country combat an insurgency. REUTERS



Burundian troops serving in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia board a United Nations helicopter in Hirshabelle State. ATMIS



“The comparative advantage of the AU and all the African countries is that they can deploy fast, and they’re willing to be more robust,” de Coning said.

Tchie said this speed and self-sufficiency is a sea change from previous missions where countries had to wait for approval from an international body or a Western backer. “They’re doing most of the logistics and they’re using most of their own equipment,” Tchie told ADF. “These are frontline states putting their assets forward to be able to deliver on these operations. That is very different from the traditional U.N. model where you’re waiting for everyone to commit.”

A PHILOSOPHY OF ‘NON-INDIFFERENCE’

In 2019, the AU adopted a Peace Support Operations doctrine that made it clear it was willing to intervene in scenarios the U.N. traditionally avoids. The document highlights that the continental body has shifted from a philosophy of nonintervention in the affairs of member states to one of “non-indifference.”

“Non-indifference means that the AU and its Member States shall not stand by and not take action and may deploy even where there is no peace to keep, to prevent and/or respond to grave circumstances namely: war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide,” the doctrine states. “This is an obligation of AU Member States.”

The doctrine also allows for interventions without the consent of the member state to stop mass atrocities.

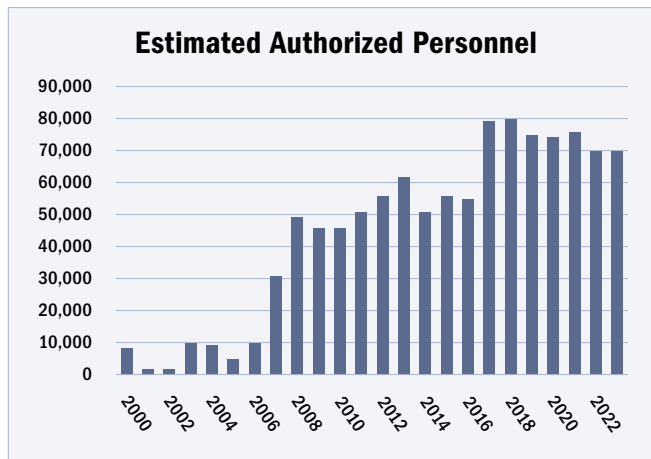
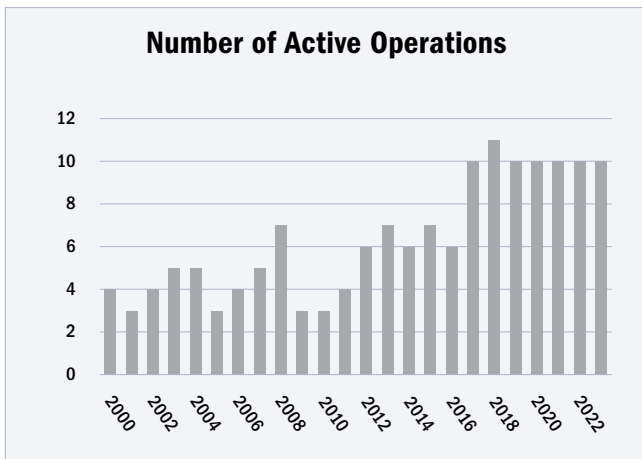


South Sudan People's Defence Forces Soldiers prepare to deploy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of the East African Community's intervention in the troubled region. The force has since left. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

But in practice, the AU has not always intervened when a member country is in turmoil. Civil wars in Ethiopia and Sudan did not elicit an AU mission. Militaries have led coups across the continent largely without AU or REC intervention.

“The African-led peace operations often fail to uphold the AU founding principle of non-indifference to leaders

Growth in African-Led Peace Operations, 2000-2023



Sources: Williams 2013; SIPRI; Security Council Report; AU; ECOWAS; Fisher and Wilen

who, through war crimes, genocides, or unconstitutional seizures of power, abuse their citizens,” wrote Dr. Nathaniel Allen in the Africa Center for Strategic Studies paper, “African-Led Peace Operations: A Crucial Tool for Peace and Security.”



An Ethiopian Soldier serving in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia marches in a parade to mark a food donation event in Baidoa. ATMIS

African-led missions have done better in the fight against violent extremist groups. Six of 17 African-led missions over the past 10 years were in response to radical Islamic extremism. These missions in places such as Mozambique, Somalia and the Lake Chad Basin take a high-tempo, muscular approach to peace support operations. This differs from the U.N., which typically is willing to intervene only to enforce a cease-fire or signed peace agreement.

African institutions also have shown a willingness to

launch operations to restore constitutional order such as the 2017 ECOWAS mission to The Gambia. Missions also have been launched to ensure free and fair elections, in response to natural disasters or health crises like the West African Ebola outbreak, and to take on violent extremist groups like the Lord’s Resistance Army.

“There is no such thing as a cookie-cutter African-led peace operation,” Allen wrote.

THE CHALLENGE OF FUNDING

Even when the will to intervene is there, funding is a challenge. Many African-led missions rely heavily on donor support.

The only recent mission to be financially self-sustaining has been SAMIM, Tchie found in his research. Other missions have needed support to last beyond 30 days. This is not surprising since the AU itself relies on donor support for about 70% of its budget and has stated that more than 40% of member states do not pay their yearly dues. An AU Peace Fund created in 2002 to support operations has been underfunded. Even the Peace Fund’s goal of \$400 million is not enough to sustain long-term missions, experts say.

There is some cause for optimism. In December 2023, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that will let it consider supporting the budget of AU-led peacekeeping missions on a case-by-case basis.

But, observers believe, in the future, these missions must be self-sustaining.

“By avoiding dependency on partners, African-led PSOs can reduce their transaction costs, avoid loss of agency and design missions according to the financial means of the bodies and member states that deploy these operations,” Tchie and de Coning wrote in an article for the Journal of International Peacekeeping.

PRIORITIZING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Although African-led missions have shown an ability

Flexible and Versatile

A strength of African-led interventions is their ability to adapt to meet a variety of challenges. In recent years, these missions have responded to electoral unrest, disease outbreaks and violent insurgencies. This adaptability sets them apart from United Nations missions, which typically are created to enforce cease-fires or protect peace agreements in postwar settings. Here is a sample of some of the missions African institutions have undertaken in recent years:

Missions	Examples (date launched)
Enforcing cease-fires or facilitating peace processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU Mission in Burundi (2003) • AU Mission in Sudan (2004) • AU Military Observer Mission to the Central African Republic (2020)
Supporting elections or democratic transitions of power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Community of Central African States Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (2002) • AU’s Electoral Security and Assistance Missions • ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (2022)
Supporting governments facing internal unrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (2017) • African Union Technical Support Team to The Gambia (2018) • Southern African Development Community Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (2017)
Peace enforcement operations against insurgents or extremist groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU Mission in Somalia (2007) • Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord’s Resistance Army (2011) • Multinational Joint Task Force (1994, expanded mandate to include counter-terror in 2012) • G5 Sahel Joint Force (2014)
Responding to health crises or pandemics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (2014) • AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2019)

Source: Africa Center for Strategic Studies

to counter insurgencies and protect civilians, the process of building a lasting peace often is elusive. African-led missions are primarily military missions with military objectives.

Although most AU missions are led by a civilian representative of the AU chairperson, their personnel are nearly entirely military. The missions have a small civilian staff to deal with complex issues that drive conflicts such as political affairs; legal issues; humanitarian needs; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and other matters.

Tchie and de Coning believe these future missions will need to prioritize a political resolution to conflicts and address underlying drivers of instability. This will require a greater investment in the civilian component of a peace operation. They believe military efforts should be made to allow space for negotiation. That way a durable, political agreement can emerge.

“If the underlying drivers are not addressed, the conflict will not be resolved, and violence will return,” Tchie and de Coning wrote.

In too many countries, missions have been able to silence the guns, only to see a quick return to violence because the warring parties did not participate in a peace process and the underlying drivers of violence were not addressed. The AU has mechanisms for conflict early warning and mediation to resolve disputes, but experts say these are underdeveloped.

“Serving a political project or peace process is critical to the credibility and legitimacy of any African-led PSO,” Tchie and de Coning wrote. “Without a political project, there is no sustainable end-state or exit strategy.”

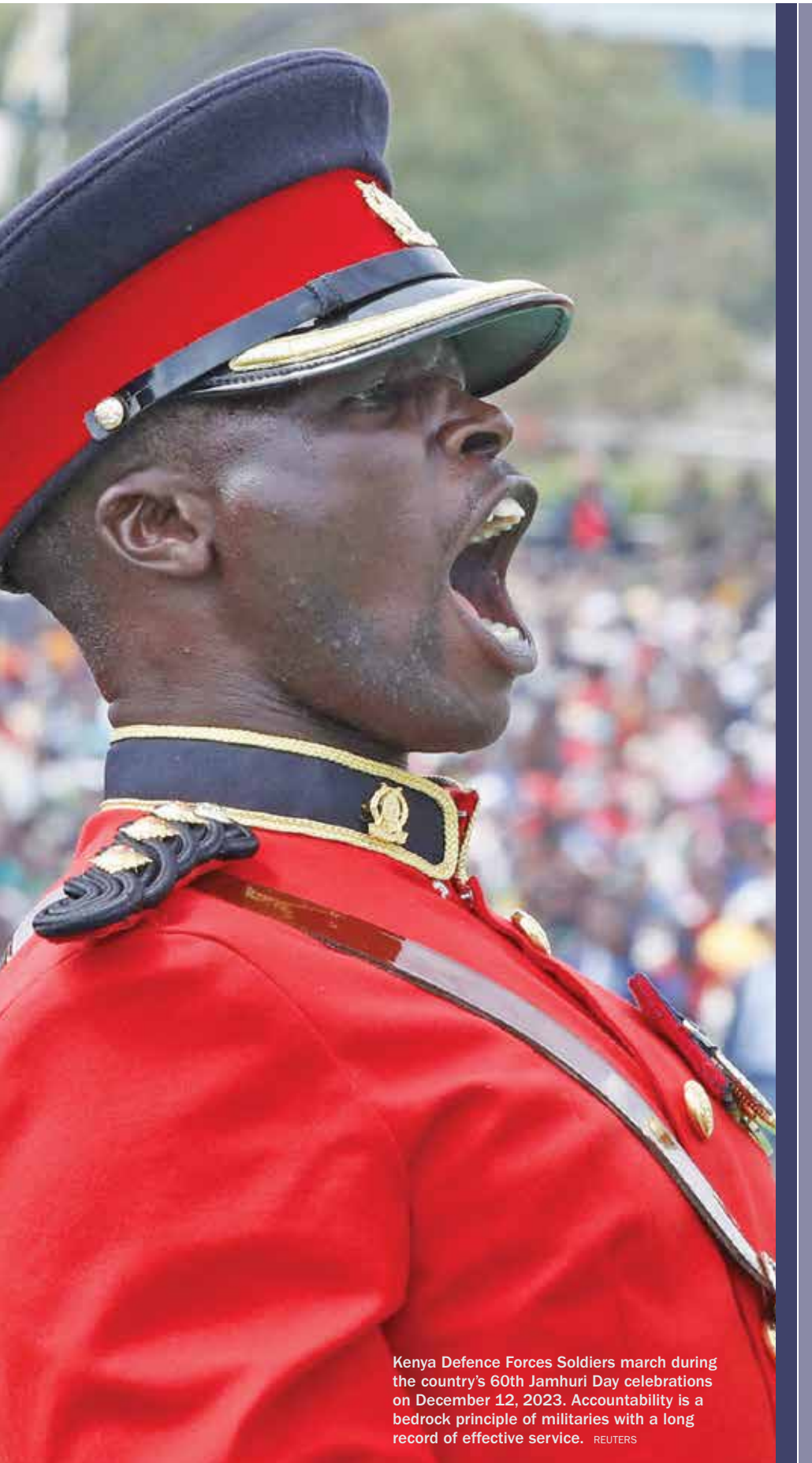
As African-led missions evolve, their ability to respond to complex threats will have major implications for the continent’s prosperity and stability.

“It is no stretch to argue that future peace and security on the continent depends upon the continued growth and evolution of African-owned modalities of conflict prevention and resolution,” Allen wrote. “To achieve their full potential, the AU, RECs, and member states must reinforce the successes and address the shortcomings of African-led peace operations.” □

ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE

IMPROVING MILITARY PERFORMANCE BY STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS





Kenya Defence Forces Soldiers march during the country's 60th Jamhuri Day celebrations on December 12, 2023. Accountability is a bedrock principle of militaries with a long record of effective service. REUTERS

ADF STAFF

A military operation in the town of Garu in northern Ghana left one man dead and dozens hospitalized on October 29, 2023.

The raid drew outrage from local residents and resulted in weeks of critical press coverage. The next month, Ghana's Parliament called the national security minister to appear in the chamber and explain the operation.

In an emotional speech, Albert Alazuuga, the member of parliament representing Garu, demanded answers. "We are heartbroken, and we call on the minister, we call on parliament to launch a full-scale investigation into this and let the facts be known to Ghanaians," Alazuuga said. "This military approach of always beating people mercilessly is one too many in the country. ... The military is not trained for internal security and so if you use them to do the wrong exercise, they'll give the wrong results."

National Security Minister Albert Kan Dapaah told parliament the raid was to remove weapons from a youth group that had previously attacked national security personnel. He noted reports of excesses by security personnel but said he could not give a full account of the matter because it was before the court system. He reminded parliamentarians of the importance of counterterrorism efforts in the area, the growing danger of interethnic conflict and the need to keep troop morale high.

"I would like to urge honorable members of the house to please exercise introspection in discussing the matter," Dapaah said.

The Garu case is just one example of how oversight and accountability can function in a democracy. It is often a tug of war between what the public wants to know and the need for secrecy in matters of national security. Sometimes military professionals are reluctant to answer to civilians. At other times, the quest for information can lead to uncomfortable conversations and stonewalling. But, experts say, when it functions correctly, oversight produces a stronger security sector.

“Security organizations must be answerable to those institutions legally mandated to oversee their activities,” Brig. Gen. Dan Kuwali, commandant of the National Defence College-Malawi, told ADF. “It is in the best interest of the military to be subject to oversight.”

There are several pillars to accountability and oversight that African countries can focus on.

EMPOWER PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

In many democracies, elected representatives play a key role in overseeing the military. They set budgets, oversee equipment procurement, confirm presidential nominees and hold hearings to scrutinize military activity. However, in some countries, this check on power has become a rubber stamp of approval. Nearly all the power lies with the chief executive, who bypasses parliament on some of the country’s most important decisions.

Some parliamentary leaders are trying to restore teeth to their constitutionally mandated role.

Bertin Mubonzi, a parliamentarian from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is part of a committee working to “dismantle the criminal networks” that exist within his country’s security sector. His team is investigating allegations of diversion of funds and illegal trafficking of minerals. The work is difficult and, at times, dangerous.

“This important work is also very sensitive because some officers have become accustomed, with time, to helping themselves,” he told the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). “We must ensure our own safety.”

Mubonzi believes in the value of his role.

“Our role is important because, on the most basic level, not playing the sovereign role that is ours as a committee and as a parliament would amount to giving the government *carte blanche*,” said Mubonzi, who is president of the Network of African Parliamentarians for Defence and Security Committees.

One challenge to parliamentary oversight is that many African countries have high turnover in parliament. In each election cycle, 40% to 60% of members leave office, resulting in officials who are inexperienced and lack the institutional knowledge necessary to regulate the armed forces.

Dr. Ken Opalo, who studies the issue and teaches at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, said that in some of the best functioning legislatures on the continent, elected officials take the time to build relationships of trust with military commanders.

“Committees that work well are able to establish their own rapport with the generals so that they can understand where they’re coming from,” Opalo said. “That requires trust and constructive dialogue and engagement as opposed to oppositional or confrontational postures that are often common in many legislatures.”

Kuwali similarly believes an effort must be made to help parliamentarians deepen their knowledge of security issues while maintaining their independence. He pointed out that the National Defence College-Malawi has parliamentarians and judges on its faculty to support this information exchange.



Members of Kenya’s parliament listen to the finance minister’s budget proposals. REUTERS



A 'SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY' REQUIRES APPROPRIATE OVERSIGHT

Brig. Gen. Dan Kuwali of the Malawi Defence Force (MDF) has served in a variety of roles, including legal advisor in the U.N. Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and chief of legal services for the MDF. He is now commandant of the National Defence College-Malawi. He has written and taught about topics relating to security sector governance, human rights, the use of force and humanitarian law. This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

ADF: Why do you think the military should embrace accountability instead of resisting it?

Kuwali: The starting point is that no individual or institution is above the law. The principle of democratic control of the armed forces requires that military personnel should be accountable to elected officials who are accountable to citizens. Instances where the military either holds de jure or de facto political power present challenges to democratic governance. Likewise, political interference by defense and security forces effectively renders mechanisms of oversight and accountability toothless. When defense and security officials ignore constitutional dictates and instead protect their own interests, they themselves become a threat to the population they are mandated to defend.

ADF: How can you balance the need for secrecy in military operations with the public's right to know?

Kuwali: Balancing transparency and confidentiality in the security sector is one of the burning questions in security sector governance. It is imperative for the defense and security sector to have well-trained public information officers and public relations personnel who can help strike that delicate balance. Transparency is a fundamental principle of accountable governance. An opaque security sector creates an environment conducive to abuse and unprofessional conduct. Without information about the formulation and

implementation of laws, policies, plans and budgets, it is impossible to hold the military accountable. However, confidentiality is necessary for sensitive matters of state security. Difficulties arise when the need for confidentiality is used to evade scrutiny by appropriate management and oversight bodies or citizens. Experience has shown that by developing trusted relationships with legislative and other oversight bodies, security organizations can retain a high degree of confidentiality in sensitive matters without compromising the principle of public accountability. As a way forward, my suggestion is that the default should be to provide information to the public. Where not possible, reasons for nondisclosure should be given, subject to a review and determination by a competent court or authority.

ADF: What should be done to strengthen the oversight role of parliament?

Kuwali: Effective security sector governance requires a system of checks and balances where vibrant legislatures and independent judiciaries provide the necessary oversight to hold the military accountable to citizens. This helps ensure that the solemn responsibility of security actors to bear arms is used in the interests of society. With mandates that include budget control, approvals of troop deployments, equipment procurement, security policy and personnel issues, parliamentary oversight committees require staff with technical expertise and experience to

help elected officials meaningfully execute their duties. Developing parliamentary expertise in security issues helps to build confidence with their security sector counterparts and plays an important role in the receptivity of their findings.

ADF: Do you think there needs to be a cultural change within the armed forces as it pertains to oversight? Can Soldiers change from viewing oversight as a burden to viewing it as a way to improve professionalism and something that leads to better security outcomes?

Kuwali: Although most democratic constitutions provide for the subordination of security organizations to civilian control, both the military and civilian authorities do not always understand the extent and limits of this control. Civilian control of the armed forces is not equal to the direct command and control of the troops. Rather, civilian control refers to the process by which elected civilians set the strategic direction regarding the use of the security sector and these civilian leaders are held accountable by the people. Therefore, we need a cultural change both ways. A quick survey shows that security sector governance is not part of the curriculum of most professional military education. This is why we at the National Defence College-Malawi have deliberately introduced a course on Security Sector Governance and the Rule of Law to ensure that service members understand the *raison d'être* of and comply with democratic oversight of the military.



“Parliamentary Oversight Committees require staff with technical expertise and experience to help elected officials meaningfully execute their duties,” Kuwali said. “Developing parliamentary expertise in security issues helps to build confidence with their security sector counterparts and plays an important role in the receptivity of their findings.”

PRIORITIZE TRANSPARENCY

Oversight is only possible when civilians have access to information about the workings of the military. However, defense leaders often demand secrecy about their work and block access to information.

“‘National security’ is often improperly deployed as an all-trumping consideration,” wrote

Godfrey Musila, a researcher and former commissioner to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan. “Once invoked, it throws up a veil that forestalls any kind of scrutiny of what government does.”

This secrecy extends beyond operational matters and includes budgets. Kuwali found that of 45 African countries that publish a military budget, 28 did not provide a complete list of expenditures. This makes it nearly impossible for the public to know how money is being spent. It also allows corruption to thrive.

“That is where some militaries get it wrong,” Kuwali said. “The more transparent the armed forces are, the more budgetary support they may get as such actions enhance the confidence of parliamentarians and public officials who allocate



People read news accounts in Nigeria about an army operation to rescue hostages. The media plays an important role in holding the military accountable and providing accurate information to the public. REUTERS

funds in the budget. Granted, the military need not disclose the exact details of acquisitions at the expense of compromising national security. However, they need to provide sufficient information about their expenditure.”

There is some cause for optimism. Since 2000, 19 African countries have passed legislation strengthening access to information. In 2012, the African Union Commission on Human Rights and Peoples’ Rights developed a model law outlining how transparency can be codified.

A 2018 report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) evaluated 47 African countries and found that 45 of them had posted at least one official budget document online. This marked an improvement from previous studies.

“Citizens everywhere should know where and how public money is spent. It is encouraging that national reporting in sub-Saharan Africa has improved,” said Dr. Nan Tian, researcher in the SIPRI Arms Transfers and Military Expenditure Programme in a news release accompanying the report.

BOLSTER INTERNAL OVERSIGHT

Many high-performing militaries have established oversight offices to investigate and report on issues relating to the discipline, efficiency, morale, training and readiness of the armed forces. This office, typically called the inspector general, sits within the military chain of command and reports to the service branch chief or the minister of defense.

As an internal oversight mechanism, the inspector general is expected to act as the “eyes, ears, voice

and conscience” of the commanders, allowing them to rectify problems before they spread. Ideally, the inspector general supports the work of external bodies like parliament to improve performance.

“Internal and external accountability mechanisms are mutually reinforcing,” Kuwali said. “Such multi-tiered oversight provides lines of defense to enhance security sector oversight. As a greater number of individuals and institutions provide oversight of security, norms for high standards of professionalism and financial integrity can be reinforced.”

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) went a step further. In 2012, the country’s parliament created the Military Ombud, which operates independently and outside of the chain of command. This office responds to complaints made by current and past members of the SANDF and investigates complaints or allegations of misbehavior made by the public against the SANDF. In its first eight years the ombud responded to 2,752 complaints, resolving 95% of them.

In a 2019 ceremony marking the end of the tenure of Ombudsman Themba Templeton Matanzima, the retired lieutenant general warned his successor “you will not have many friends now in the military,” but stressed the importance of accountability.

“When there is something wrong, the military must correct that by drilling, by punishing,” Matanzima said. “The office is not about lowering standards of discipline; the office is about human rights.”

OPEN UP TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE MEDIA

Although not part of the formal oversight process, nongovernmental organizations, human rights groups, the media and civil society organizations have an important role. They investigate and amplify stories that require military attention. Many cases of embezzlement or abuse on the continent were uncovered by reporters or human rights advocates.

Other institutions including government-funded human rights commissions and anti-corruption commissions are part of what is called “horizontal accountability.” These groups are mandated to monitor, document and make recommendations regarding abuses.

In a webinar hosted by the ACSS, Abdul Tejan-Cole, former commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone, stressed the need for independent watchdog organizations.

“Accountability and oversight mechanisms are really the bedrock of democratic societies, and they are crucial for enhancing the rule of law,” Tejan-Cole said. “Nobody is above the law. The police need to be policed, and the army itself needs to be policed. They need to be made accountable to communities and the people they serve.” □



'MAN WILL FLY FOREVER'

Then-Maj. Gen. John Mugaravai Omenda visits Mombasa Forward Operating Base, where he evaluated operational capabilities in the coastal region. KENYA AIR FORCE



A Conversation With Lt. Gen. John M. Omenda, Vice Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces

ADF STAFF

Lt. Gen. John Mugaravai Omenda was appointed vice chief of the Kenya Defence Forces in May 2024. Prior to that he spent three years as Kenya Air Force Commander. He joined the Kenya Air Force in 1991 and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in 1992. He trained as a fighter pilot and also has trained in intelligence, security and flight safety. He is a graduate of the Defence Staff College of Kenya and the Royal College of Defence Studies, United Kingdom. He holds a diploma in Strategic Studies from the University of

Nairobi, a bachelor's degree in Peace and Conflict studies from Nazarene University, and a master's degree in International Security and Strategy from King's College, London.

His tours of duty include serving as base commander at Laikipia Air Base and as deputy air force commander. He also served in the United Nations Mission in Liberia from 2006 to 2007. He spoke to ADF in Tunis, Tunisia, during the 2024 African Air Chiefs Symposium. The interview has been edited for space and clarity.

ADF: How did you come to make a career of being in the military?

Omenda: I desired it from childhood. I was fascinated by planes flying all over our local area into the training area. I schooled in our local town called Kakamega in the western part of the country, and then went all the way to Nairobi for high school. Immediately after high school, I could not resist the military because I was ripe to join. All my career has been in the military. The military takes over in giving you the necessary training to reach the right state.

ADF: What are the most pressing needs for your air force right now?

Omenda: Human resources. And of course, money is always an issue. Operating an air force is not a cheap thing; most countries find it very hard. There has to be a balance between security and other pressing needs like health, agriculture, education and so on. The country's basic needs are rivaling the budget to support military operations. Operating an air force is quite expensive.

ADF: Drones are an emerging technology for many militaries. What is your air force's plan for using drones?



Omenda, center, poses with other participants at the 2024 African Air Chiefs Symposium in Tunis, Tunisia. ADF STAFF

Omenda: Yes, drones are the "in" thing. But remember, you get drones for a purpose. Any air force does its own acquisition of equipment, depending on the peculiar needs in the region. For us, they are important, yes, but not as important as they are in other regions. We have some, we are acquiring some, but they are dictated by the needs we have.



Omenda opens an Air Defence seminar in 2024 at Laikipia Air Base in Nanyuki. KENYA AIR FORCE

ADF: Are you using them for surveillance?

Omenda: Mostly surveillance, right, because they are cost-effective, they are easy to operate, they are cheaper, and therefore they add a lot of value. However, you have to supplement them with other equipment to be able to achieve the desired military target. Still, they save quite a lot, instead of using the real manned planes that are quite expensive.

The initial cost could be high, but the maintenance cost is bearable, and therefore you operate it for a long time, and it serves you longer. In the long run, it's a cheaper option than a manned platform, because a manned platform requires a human being. You need to train the pilot, you need to train the technician, fuel it, bring it up, maintain it. In the long run, a manned asset is quite expensive.

ADF: Do you see drone use continuing to grow?

Omenda: You cannot replace manned platforms with drones. They will complement each other forever. I don't see a situation or a time when manned platforms will disappear. It will not be possible. Man will fly forever. That you can take from me.

ADF: A lot of Africa's air forces have a variety of planes, but only one or two of a specific platform. They'll have 20 planes, but eight or nine different platforms. That can complicate maintenance and training. Is that a problem for your air force?

Omenda: You are right. The more variety you have, the more expensive it is to maintain. A certain type of aircraft requires certain special equipment to maintain it. If you have a big variety, then you have to have so many varieties of maintenance equipment. It's cheaper if you have one platform. In the long run, we face the same problems. You can't have one kind of aircraft because missions are varied. You must have helicopters, you must have fixed wings, you must have props, you must have jets, and therefore, you'll have a variety. It's not easy in the long run. If you can keep a certain type, for example, rotaries of similar type, jets of similar type and props of similar type, then you reduce the variety, which in the long run is manageable.

ADF: Military transport planes are becoming particularly critical in such areas as humanitarian assistance. Are you comfortable with the size of your transport fleet?

Omenda: No, nobody has enough. We always dream of large fleets, but, you know, they are all dictated by their costs to operate and maintain. I don't have enough, for sure. I don't have enough crew, I don't have enough engineers and technicians. But at least we are maintaining what we have, and we are hoping that going into the future, we'll be able to upscale and get the right numbers in place.

ADF: It's hard to talk about the African armed forces without mentioning the effect terrorism is having. Kenya has had to deal with terrorist incidents in the past year. What role does the air force play in combating this problem?

Omenda: Professional armies and air forces are trained to conduct conventional war. Terrorism is not conventional warfare; it's asymmetric warfare. We tend to rely on the rules of war in armed conflict, international humanitarian law and so on. Terrorism does not play by those rules, therefore it's a challenge, especially for air forces. The air force, and the kind of equipment we have, we are not wired to fight terrorism. But we are learning fast, and we are having an effect in reducing the impacts of terrorism.

But let me tell you something: Terrorism cannot be stopped through kinetics — it cannot be stopped by war alone. Terrorism is manifested due to social problems, and if you need to win a war, you must identify the problems. Because it is a social problem, terrorism must be approached socially and supplemented by the use of kinetics to reduce its effects. It's not all just about kinetics, the use of force. You need everybody on board, and the world needs to come together, because this transcends all boundaries. It's not localized. It's important that we cooperate against terrorism, but it's a social issue that needs to be approached.

ADF: There is always talk about neighboring countries partnering to fight terrorism and address other problems. How do you view your relationship with the air forces of your neighboring countries?

Omenda: We do have a strong relationship. We have regional bodies that we subscribe to, for example, we have the East African Community. And we have the East African Community Regional Force, EACRF, that has been deployed in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We collaborate on so many fronts, we share resources and it's working for us. However, other national needs make it a bit difficult to have a continuous kind of effect.

ADF: You've stressed the point that as big as your needs are, human welfare has to come ahead of the military.

Omenda: Yes, but you can't do without military power. We are social human beings that make nations. And nations have needs, and nations are not self-sufficient. A lack of military can really expose you. If some rogue nation needs something that you have, you will be walked over, and that cannot happen. There is no single nation that can do without a military force. It's a social issue; it is a necessity, and therefore they'll be there to stay. From time immemorial, we even had local security forces guarding their own locality and resources against invasion, invasion from fellow humans. It's unthinkable to be without some kind of defense. You'll be vulnerable, and you'll lose everything.

ADF: Officials at the 2024 African Air Chiefs Symposium in Tunisia have emphasized the need for more training and better treatment of female personnel. How do you think Kenya is doing in these regards?

Omenda: We are doing very well. Remember, Kenya is different. As far as women in uniform are concerned, we have a peculiar case. From the onset, we had female military personnel. Kenya Defence Forces was formed with women on board. They were a specialized unit serving a specialized need and were specifically attached to the army. But they served across the services in the navy, the air force, whenever they were needed. However, in 2002, there was a policy shift that they should spread across the services and don service uniforms. They were disbanded and distributed on certain ratios. Now, every service recruits its own female personnel depending on the needs, because a military is a specialized service. And for us in Kenya, we don't recognize percentages, but we give women good opportunities, especially where they perform well. And we've seen tremendous results in that. The numbers just come up by themselves. Right now, they are quite high by African standards.



Omenda said the Kenya Air Force is quickly learning how to reduce the "impacts of terrorism." KENYA AIR FORCE

ADF: Some United Nations peacekeeping missions have struggled recently in Africa. Do you have any thoughts on the future of peacekeeping missions in Africa?

Omenda: Peacekeeping missions will always be there because peace and security are part and parcel of the human need. So long as there are conflicts, there will be need for peacekeeping missions, and therefore, resolutions will still be passed by the U.N. to have peacekeeping missions in any conflict zone. However, the clause that says that the country should be willing to accept the mission is the weakest link. I foresee a case whereby the international community can force a peacekeeping mission in a region if need be. If it affects the region and the world, then a decision will have to be made. The future of peacekeeping is still there, and there is still a need, in my own opinion, so long as there is conflict. □

INFLUENCE

on an

INDUSTRIAL SCALE

ADF STAFF



Professional Military Education in Africa Is Just One Cog in China’s Machine to Build a New Global Order

The Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Leadership School in Kibaha, Tanzania, looks like any institution of higher learning on the outside. Its campus shines with newness and embodies the spirit of Southern Africa’s six major liberation movements, which took part in its establishment.

Once inside its classrooms, however, a very particular and intentional type of instruction is offered, soaked in Chinese political doctrine and intended to “proselytize and methodically share” the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) governance model to build influence and gain allies on the continent, according to Paul Nantulya, research associate and China specialist for the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS).

The school is named for Tanzania’s first prime minister and five-term former president. His party and five others from the region co-founded the school. Those parties still rule Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Together the six nations are part of the Former Liberation Movements of Southern Africa.

The school started with help from the CCP International Liaison Department, which provided a \$40 million grant for its construction, Nantulya wrote for the ACSS. Chinese political functionaries from Beijing have taught there.

Through the Nyerere school, and others in China, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and CCP are trying to capture the hearts and minds of African military personnel to help tilt the global order toward China. Professional military education (PME) is just one part



Political functionaries from Beijing have taught at the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Leadership School in Kibaha, Tanzania. MJNLS

of China’s efforts to outsource its “party-army” model and secure military and political support across the continent.

“What China wants to achieve, more than anything else, is a foundation consisting of a consistently reliable, supportive constituent base,” Nantulya told ADF. This base would form a “foundation of constituencies of support that it can tap, recruit as and when needed to achieve the political objectives that are set by the CCP.”

A LOOK AT CHINESE PME

China always has approached engagement in Africa through political means rather than through displays of military commitment and power, Nantulya wrote for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in 2023. This

contrasts with the former Soviet Union and Cuba. The former had six bases in Africa and supplied soldiers, advisors and heavy weapons. Cuba sent tens of thousands of troops to Angola and even participated in combat there.

China preferred a lighter footprint. Starting in Algeria in 1963, China sent medical teams to Africa each year. Each team consisted of between 25 and 100 civilian and military members who served two or three years at a time, Nantulya wrote. During the Cold War and beyond, about 40 such medical teams were operating in Africa at any given time.

Still, China's most prevalent African engagement across the past 20 years is in PME, Nantulya wrote. Most of the engagement takes place in China at one of three types of schools:

1. Midlevel command and academic institutions, such as the command colleges attached to PLA service branches.
2. Specialized academic professional schools, such as PLA medical universities, China's peace-keeping training center and its police peace-keeping training center.

3. Strategic-level schools such as the PLA's National Defense University and its components.

At least 50 African nations take part in Chinese PME regularly — nearly 93% of all countries on the continent. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the PLA was educating about 2,000 African military officers each year at military and political academies, Nantulya wrote for the ACSS.

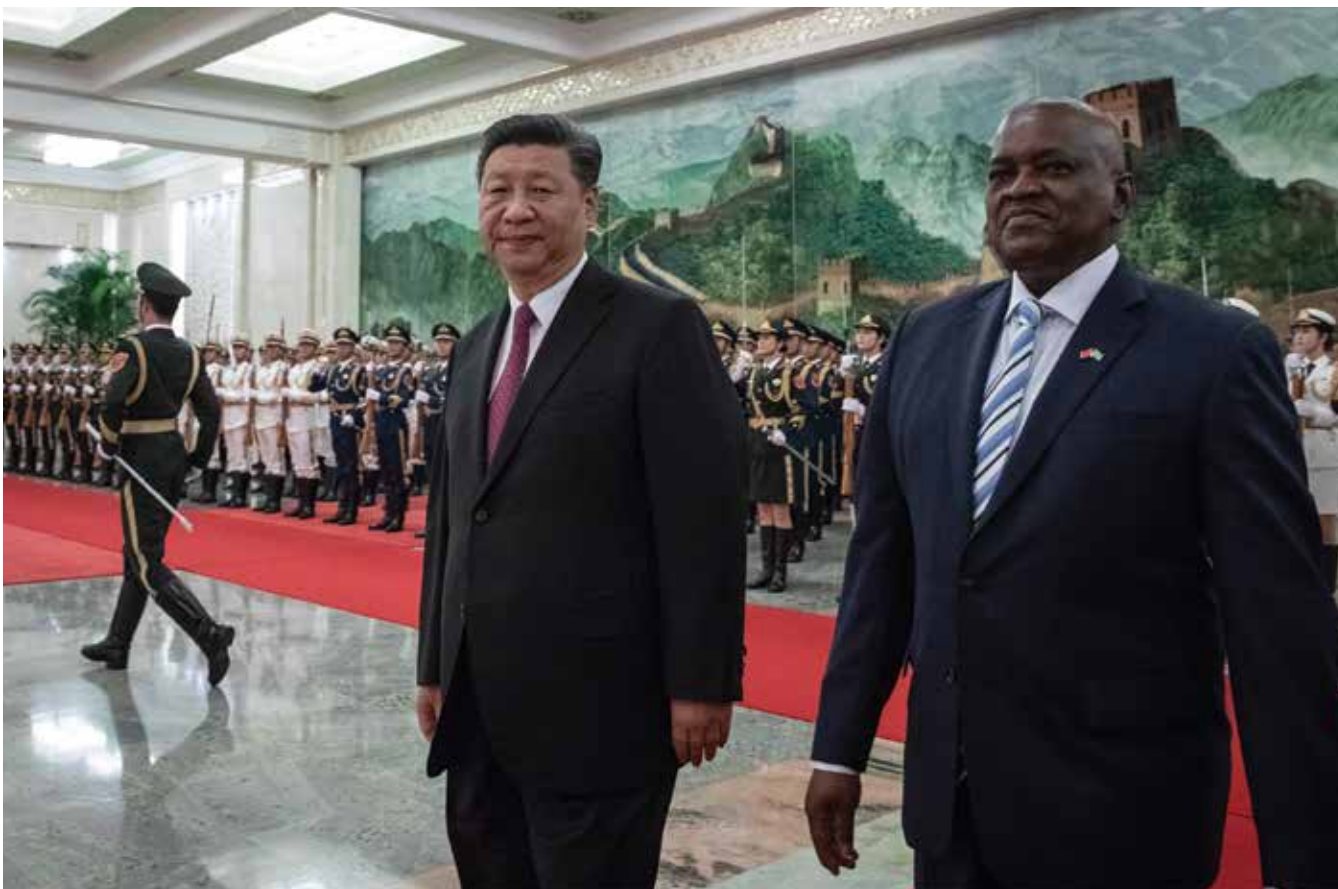
Chinese PME is noticeably different from Western teaching. In U.S. and other western military schools, class facilitators guide student discussions and encourage them to question things and use critical thinking to enhance their learning. They are not a "purveyor of the word," Nantulya said. In fact, he said, some African officers are not accustomed to that freedom to critique and seek assurances that doing so is acceptable.

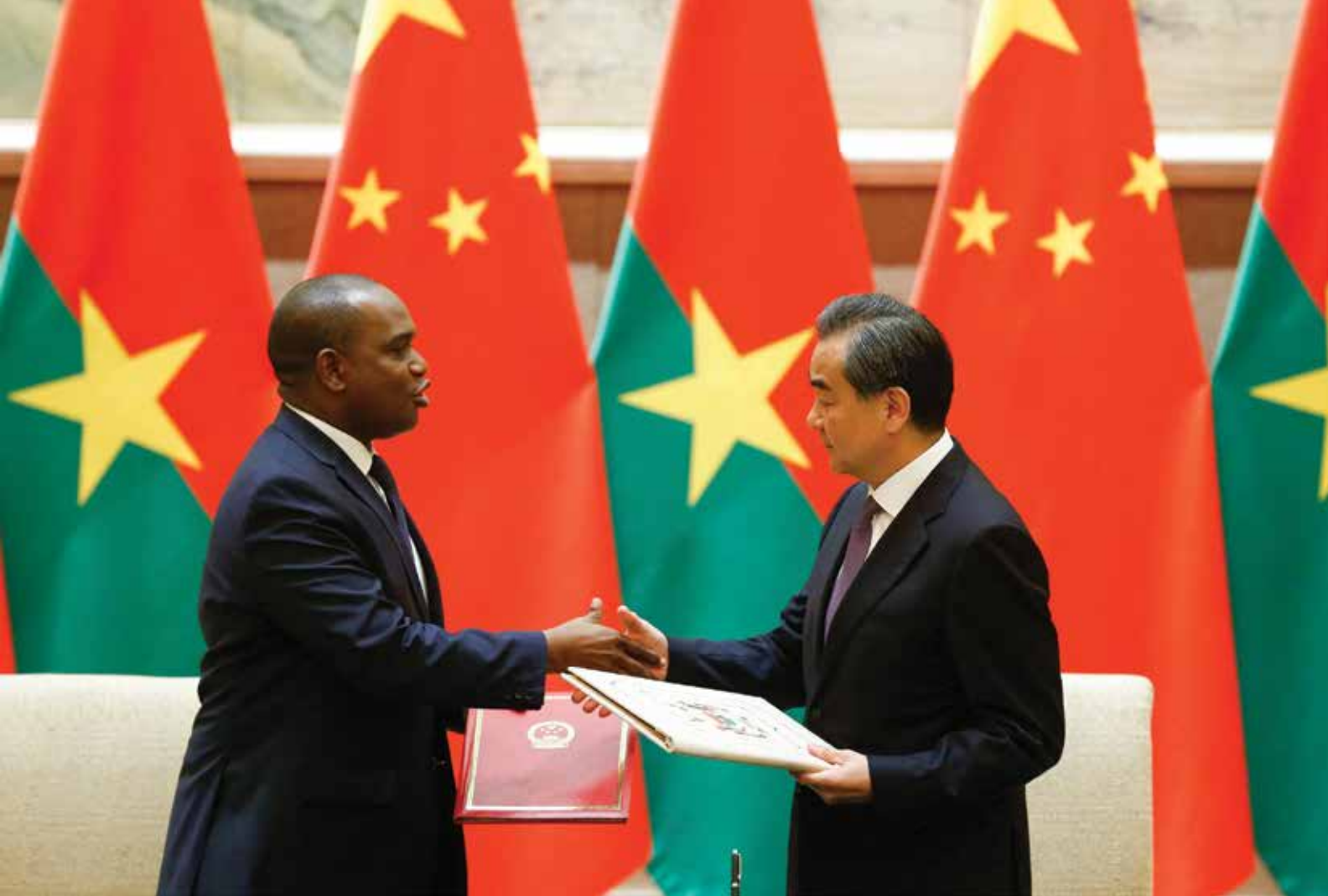
In Chinese PME schools, students are not allowed to question or criticize the Chinese system.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is chairman of the CCP Central Military Commission, noted that "the PLA was slowly developing an identity of its own outside the CPC and had to be brought back in line," Nantulya wrote for USIP. In November 2014, at the All Army Political Work Conference, Xi noted 10 problems related to ideology, party loyalty and discipline, and issued new rules to "revitalize the ideological commitment of the PLA to party leadership,

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Chinese President Xi Jin Ping and Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi review the People's Liberation Army honor guard in Beijing.

GETTY IMAGES





which sets the basic guideline for Chinese PME,” Nantulya wrote.

In classes for high-ranking officers, African students are segregated from Chinese personnel. African and Chinese officers will learn the same material but will do so on separate campuses, presumably to keep from exposing Chinese personnel to unwelcome ideas. “African officers also say that the quality of the programs at this level is lower than in the United States and United Kingdom on international issues, critical analysis, and national security strategy,” Nantulya wrote for ACSS. “In U.S. schools, African students work with their American colleagues and can critique their instructors and advance their own perspectives. This is not possible in the Chinese setting.”

“You can’t compare what I did here with what my colleagues did at PLA NDU,” an African alumnus of the U.S. Army War College told Nantulya.

CHINA’S MILITARY MODEL

China’s military differs from Western forces in that it is a “party army,” not a national military. That means the PLA is an arm of the CCP, not the country. Other militaries, including many in Africa, are beholden to civilian control and national constitutions. Such

Burkina Faso’s then-Foreign Minister Alpha Barry, left, and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi shake hands after the signing of an agreement establishing diplomatic relations in May 2018.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

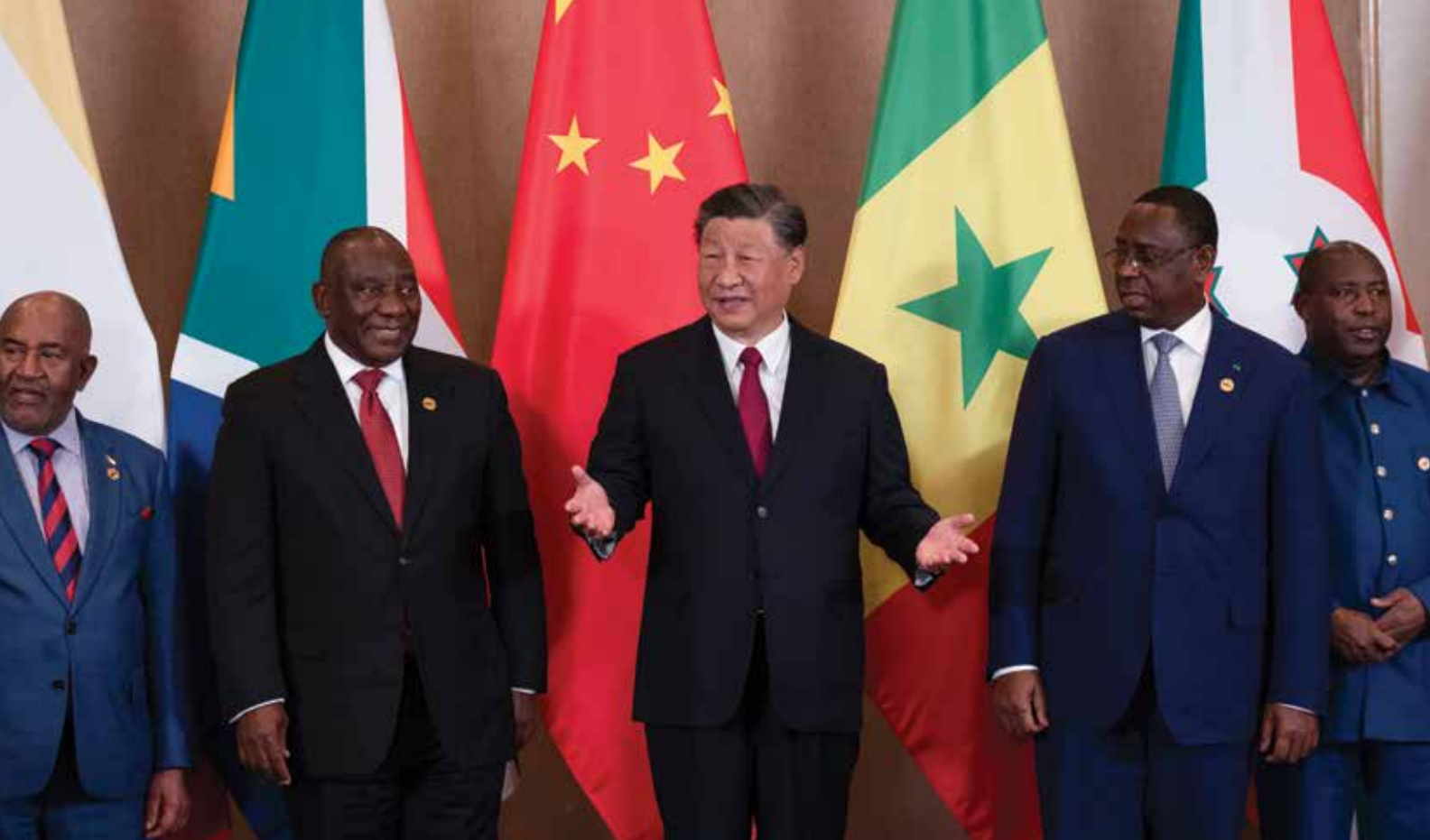
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militaries discourage member participation in party politics, considering it inconsistent with democratic values and proper civil-military relations.

Political functionaries within the Central Military Commission always lead PLA engagements with African countries. The commission is on par with departments that deal with training, logistics and other matters.

Politics always will be the tip of the spear when China engages with an African country. Political commissars will be at the forefront of any effort, whether it involves negotiating military equipment sales, training or PME. This is called “military political work,” Nantulya said. “The party-army work, the party-army orientation, the party-army model — it filters into everything that the PLA does when it interacts with others.”

China sees Southern Africa’s liberation heritage as fertile ground for the spread of its party-army philosophy. Zimbabwe already is known for having



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, second from left, and Xi, center, attend the China-Africa Leaders' Roundtable Dialogue in Johannesburg in 2023. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

employed its military in service of its ruling party. Former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe in 2017 co-opted a quote from Mao Zedong when he said, “politics shall always lead the gun and not the gun politics.”

Chinese PME, which often consists of classroom instruction and standard field training, advances party-army principles and influences African personnel in various ways. African attendees will learn about joint warfighting, troop organization, the use of artillery and other tactics, but that instruction will be subsumed by the political context and led by PLA officers steeped in political training and indoctrination, Nantulya said.

Conversely, many high-performing militaries use training models that stress the need for the military to remain apolitical and loyal to the nation’s constitution rather than a political party.

The Chinese model can erode democratic principles and proper civil-military relations, although the process can be subtle and slow. African delegations will see the political dynamic up front every time they interact with the PLA. That result likely would be in countries where there is a “legacy of latent

behaviors that ascribe to the military a party-political role,” Nantulya said. China’s approach gives tacit approval to such tendencies. The approach is underscored by the countries the PLA prioritizes, such as Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

CHINA’S ULTIMATE GOAL

It’s no mystery why China has prioritized Southern Africa for the location of its one PME institution on the continent. But China has ambitions beyond that region. Indeed, China has built relationships through PME and training across the continent. Even countries that don’t share China’s revolutionary heritage are attracted to its PME purely for its accessibility. One thing China offers that many western nations can’t match is scale. China simply offers more classroom slots for African personnel to fill.

An African training officer told Nantulya that he is under pressure to train as many Soldiers as possible in five years to improve standards and reform the military. In fact, the officer said he sometimes struggles to fill the slots China makes available because he can’t afford to send that much human resource abroad at once.

China exploits that scale by training as many Africans as it can, sometimes engaging with the same people more than once over time.

China views the current world order as hostile to its ambitions. So, all over Africa and across South



Asia and Latin America, China wants to build a foundation of support that it can leverage to help offer an alternative to the current system.

Its efforts are not limited to Southern African nations that share a liberation heritage, Nantulya said. China has trained hundreds of military personnel from across the continent, including democratic nations whose political values are at odds with China's autocratic, political military philosophy. Where there is an opportunity to impart China's ideological model, the PLA will use it.

Despite the thousands of African trainees, China needs only a small percentage — perhaps 2% per year — to go back home with a positive outlook about the country, Nantulya said. Just a few dozen well-placed people will make a difference and are just enough to infect an institution.

"They throw a lot into it, and then what happens is that over the years they identify those that continue to have this positive sentiment, and they keep inviting them back, they keep engaging them, they keep giving them opportunities, and so on," he said.

The Chinese model begins as an extensive PME effort, but then it cascades and targets specific individuals.

This PME cycle is one cog in the gear of China's influence engine. Soldiers and officers train in schools that push China's ideology and doctrine. Simultaneously, China seeks political influence

Ugandan Soldiers attend an engineering class taught by Ugandan Soldiers and U.S. Marines at Camp Singo, Uganda, in 2019.

SGT. BETHANIE RYAN/U.S. MARINE CORPS

and financial leverage through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure projects. As African governments depend more on China for both, some African military personnel might see opportunities to advance their careers, reinforcing a growing relationship with China. The circle of influence grows, and China can exploit it in multinational forums such as the United Nations.

Burkina Faso provides an example. Several years ago, Burkina Faso sought help with infrastructure projects but did not have the money to fund them. China offered to bring the country into the BRI. But there was a catch: Burkina Faso would have to adopt China's stance on the status of Taiwan, a prickly geopolitical matter. In 2018, after 24 years of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Burkina Faso ended that relationship and recognized Beijing instead.

"Burkina Faso and China engaged in this dance, where China needed an ally, Burkina Faso needed finance, and so they were able to find each other half-way," Nantulya said. "But after Burkina Faso signed this BRI agreement, then we began to see Burkina Faso soldiers going to China for military training. So, you can see how it works." □

Somali Police Force Marks 80 Years

ADF STAFF

As Somalia continues to take charge of a greater share of its own national security, its long-standing police force marked an important milestone. The Somali Police Force, formed on December 20, 1943, celebrated its 80th anniversary with pomp and a parade. Gen. Sulub Ahmed Firin, chief of the Somali Police Force, told those assembled at the celebration he was “privileged to extend my congratulations to all ranks of the National Police Force as we mark the 80th anniversary of its inception,” according to Halqabsi News. Firin also thanked police for their commitment to consistently protect people and property. The next day, Gen. Osman Abdullahi Mohamed (Kaniif), deputy commissioner of the force, welcomed his counterpart in the Federal Police of Ethiopia, Musfin Abebe Badeye. The two discussed cooperation between the two forces, especially on border security, crime prevention and counterterrorism. They also discussed regional security challenges, according to the Somali National News Agency.

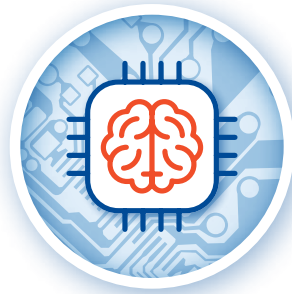


Somali Police Force tactical units, right, and the police band march during a ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of the force at the Scuola Policia in Mogadishu on December 20, 2023. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



HARNESSING
a
NEW TOOL





Advances in AI Will Change the Dynamics of Conflicts On and Off the Battlefield

ADF STAFF

Africa may have already gotten its first experience with artificial intelligence on the battlefield in mid-2020. That's when Turkish-made autonomous Kargu-2 drones tracked and killed members of Libyan Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's forces as they retreated from their failed siege of Tripoli, according to reports.

Although the exact nature of the attack remains in dispute — some observers question whether the drones truly were acting on their own — a growing number of experts predict artificial intelligence (AI) will play an increasing role in Africa, on and off the battlefield.

"AI is not coming to Africa, it's already here. And its role is only likely to grow in the coming years," Abdul Hakeem Ajijola, chair of the African Union's Cyber Experts Group, recently told the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS).

As the use of AI expands, governments and regulators have been slow to adopt the rules needed to govern its use.

"On AI policy, there are no countries in the world that are prepared," Rob Floyd, director of innovation and digital policy for the Ghana-based Africa Center for Economic Transformation, told ADF.

More than 2,400 African organizations already are working with AI across a variety of sectors, from agriculture and health to law enforcement and security. AI monitors crops for disease, guides drones delivering medications to distant villages and scans crowds for potential terrorists. AI's capacity for digesting huge amounts of data quickly and finding patterns within it makes the technology a valuable tool, according to Ajijola and other experts.



This image shows how AI can be paired with a rifle to provide a Soldier real-time, actionable combat information. REUTERS

That said, the exact meaning of AI, like the technology itself, continues to evolve.

"There is no agreed definition for artificial intelligence right now," South Africa-based attorney and researcher Nokuthula Olorunju, a research fellow at Research ICT Africa, recently told ACSS. "We're discovering it as we go along."

Current AI technology ranges from artificial narrow intelligence, such as online systems that provide real-time traffic updates, to generative AI such as ChatGPT, which can create text, video and audio content that can be used to spread misinformation and drive conflict.

One thing AI researchers agree on: Like electricity, the internet or a four-wheel-drive vehicle, AI is a tool that only is as good or bad as the humans who use it.

"The scare around AI is because of the proliferation of harms that we see being caused through the use of AI," Olorunju said. "It boils down to the safety and security issues that are caused when AI is allowed to run free. AI currently exists in a legal gray area, and the law is not able to keep up."

Adopting Artificial Intelligence in Africa



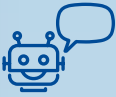
75+ Ventures in Africa using artificial intelligence:

Included



Data and analytics

Building smart analytics products



Bots, chatbots and virtual assistants

Building front-facing technologies such as bots and virtual assistants



Vision

Building AI-enabled vision systems such as smart cameras



Language or text recognition

Developing smart systems powered by AI



Hub or AI centers

Supporting startups building AI-powered products or services



Health and diagnostics

Providing AI-based health care services



Professional services and AI developers

Providing AI support and rebranding



Robotics

Building robots and other AI-enabled machines



Not Included



Drones

Organizations that build or provide drone services only

Source: BRITER BRIDGES

AI and Analysis

AI experts are quick to point out that the technology is no substitute for human knowledge, intuition and creativity.

“It’s actually pattern recognition,” Ajijola said.

For all its capabilities, AI’s greatest strength may be its ability to sort the wheat from piles of digital chaff quickly, efficiently and at a scale that human beings could never achieve.

Whether the data represents terrorists’ communications, radar readings of ship traffic or the movements of poachers in wildlife areas, AI’s capacity for pattern recognition provides human users with data that makes security actions more precise and less risky.

In Malawi’s Liwonde National Park, for example, AI-powered EarthRanger software studies poaching patterns within the park and, using predictive analytics, alerts rangers to potential surges in activity so they can develop their anti-poaching strategy.

The system’s “poacher cams” can distinguish between people and animals moving through the park, letting rangers identify poachers without having to put themselves in danger.

The Nigerian Navy has begun integrating AI into its systems to strengthen its operational capacity and keep pace with evolving technology.

Nigerian Chief of Naval Staff Vice Adm. Emmanuel Ogalla said that AI can predict the most fuel-efficient way to operate a ship. Integrated into the ship’s radar operations or threat-detection systems, it can help operators process information faster and better understand how to respond to a threat at sea. In that way, AI can improve the navy’s ability to fight illegal fishing and drug trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea, experts say.

Ogalla also highlighted another benefit AI will provide to the Nigerian Navy: predictive maintenance. As AI monitors a ship’s systems, it can identify potential equipment failures and alert the crew to the need for maintenance, catching problems when they still are small. Doing so will ensure that ships remain ready rather than sitting docked for repairs.

“The Nigerian Navy must continue to adopt and integrate these technologies in order to maintain a competitive edge during operations,” Ogalla told the Nigerian newspaper Leadership.

For Ajijola, AI’s processing capacity and pattern recognition abilities let analysts focus on planning and strategy rather than spending their days sifting through mountains of data.

“We must find ways to ease the burden on analysts so they’re more efficient,” Ajijola said.

On the Battlefield

Perhaps more than any other technology that uses AI, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) — drones — represent the promise and the threat inherent in artificial intelligence. In that respect, an AI-powered arms race may already be in motion across Africa as militaries

AI's processing capacity and pattern recognition abilities let analysts focus on planning and strategy rather than spending their days sifting through mountains of data.

stock up on drone technology to supplement ground and maritime forces.

"Despite global calls for a ban on similar weapons, the proliferation of systems like the Kargu-2 [rotary wing attack drone] is likely only beginning," analysts Nathaniel Allen and Marian "Ify" Okpali wrote for the Brookings Institution in 2022.

Militaries across Africa have bought or placed orders for the Kargu-2 and the larger Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drones. The list of countries adding the Turkish drones to their arsenals includes Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda and Togo.

Although the current crop of drones is not publicly acknowledged to have AI capabilities, drone makers already are promoting the next generation of drones that definitely will use AI.

South Africa's Paramount Group introduced its AI-driven N-Raven drone system in 2021 with the capacity to swarm targets. Although the UAVs can be used for reconnaissance, each is large enough to carry

The Nigerian Navy conducts a maritime security riverine patrol in January 2024 in the Niger Delta. The Navy has said it hopes to use predictive AI to improve vessel maintenance. NIGERIAN NAVY



The Nigerian Navy prepares to use a helicopter drone in a maritime security role in 2024. AI can improve the processing of data collected by UAVs during reconnaissance. NIGERIAN NAVY

up to a 15-kilogram payload, creating the potential for attack by multiple drones coordinating with each other to find and eliminate targets while overwhelming the target's defenses.

"These are new machines of war," Ajjola said.

Experts say the use of AI-powered drones and similar automated, free-range weapons raises an important question: Who's responsible for their actions?

"At the end of the day, where does the buck stop?" Olorunju said. "Who has accountability? Who bears responsibility — is it the country? The manufacturer?"

Observers say it's only a matter of time until AI technology finds its way into the hands of insurgents, who could then use it to terrorize communities or attack government institutions without exposing their own



More than 2,400 African companies, many of them startups, are working to develop AI technology as governments and industry move ahead with research institutes and events such as the annual AI Expo Africa. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

fighters. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram have used non-AI drones to conduct reconnaissance and film battles with government forces.

“Non-state actors will adopt these technologies themselves and come up with clever ways to exploit or negate them,” wrote Allen and Okpali. “Artificial intelligence will be used in combination with equally influential, but less flashy inventions such as the AK-47, the nonstandard tactical vehicle, and the IED to enable new tactics that take advantage or exploit trends towards better sensing capabilities and increased mobility.”

Challenges

The prospect of extremists adopting AI-powered weapons is just one of the challenges African countries face as AI use increases across the continent.

As technology like AI develops, it heightens the threat to cybersecurity, researcher Emmanuel Arakpogun wrote in a study published by Northumbria University.

“State or individual actors could cripple critical infrastructure in a manner that threatens the existence of a nation,” he wrote.

AI-driven attacks on critical infrastructure such as power, water and banking could happen at a speed and with a frequency that human cybersecurity teams would struggle to match. Researchers say AI systems could fill that gap, monitoring systems around the clock and alerting its human counterparts when suspicious activity appears.

Beyond physical infrastructure, nations face AI-powered attacks on their democratic infrastructure. Generative AI systems already can create so-called deepfake videos along with realistic looking fake news articles and other content aimed at stoking conflict, undermining leaders, and sowing suspicion and violence across societies.

“Cruise missiles can take down a building, but AI can ‘hack’ the electorate to convince countries to elect the wrong people,” Ajjola said.

Further complicating things: “Generative AI leaves few fingerprints,” Melissa Fleming, the United Nations’ global communications chief, recently told the U.N. “Generative AI holds massive potential for voter manipulation.”

Experts agree that African governments can use AI to defend against online attacks, but they also note that Africa needs to catch up in terms of educating skilled programmers and funding projects. That is changing, however.

The recently opened U.N.-funded African Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, joins a growing list of institutes from Morocco to South Africa and from Ghana to Rwanda that seek to expand Africa’s homegrown capacity for meeting the promise and threats of AI.



African-made AI has the potential to create jobs and provide employment to millions of people on the continent, Floyd said. That, along with AI-aided innovations in agriculture, infrastructure, government spending and more, could reduce conflicts over resources that drive insecurity in Africa, he added.

“If people are more productive and resources are used more productively, one would hope that you would have a society that is more in harmony,” Floyd told ADF.

Of Africa’s 2,400 AI-related companies, more than 40% are startups that already have received hundreds of millions of dollars in seed funding. That’s a sliver of the \$79.2 billion spent globally on AI in 2022, and much of it has gone into developing financial technology in Nigeria, a hub for online financial fraud, according to Arakpogun.

Although Nigeria has attracted the largest amount of AI-related investment capital, South Africa has generated the largest number of AI-related companies, followed by Nigeria and Kenya. Egypt, Ghana, Tunisia and Zimbabwe also are among the continent’s top AI pioneers.



“In order to avoid a repeat of the missed opportunities from the previous industrial revolutions that have left a negative legacy for African countries, governments must create an enabling environment for these AI start-ups to flourish and accelerate the socio-economic development of Africa.”

~ Emmanuel Arakpogun, researcher

“In order to avoid a repeat of the missed opportunities from the previous industrial revolutions that have left a negative legacy for African countries, governments must create an enabling environment for these AI start-ups to flourish and accelerate the socio-economic development of Africa,” Arakpogun wrote.

The Future

As African countries look toward their future relationship with AI, it’s imperative that they develop strategies to address the good and bad aspects of the technology, experts say.

Mauritius led the way in 2018 when it published its national AI strategy, describing the technology as creating a new pillar for development for decades to come. Other African countries have followed, although none has achieved Mauritius’ level of preparedness.

In 2002, Oxford Insights ranked every country on a 100-point scale for its readiness to use AI to deliver public services. Mauritius, with a score of 53.8, and South Africa

(47.74), Egypt (49.42), and Tunisia (46.81) are the only African countries to exceed the global average of 44.6.

The African Working Group on AI hopes to construct a unified strategy for the continent, an important step toward encouraging nations to share their data to optimize AI systems.

“One of the biggest challenges in Africa is the quality of and access to data,” Floyd said. “Economic data is often years out of date.”

The African Union’s AI for Africa Blueprint, developed in 2021, spells out the opportunities and challenges of using AI and proposes key principles to guide its use in the future. Any AI strategy developed by African countries needs to reflect African values, not be a “cut-and-paste” from elsewhere, experts say.

“This is not a theory. This is not in some other part of the world,” Ajijola said. “We need to determine which African philosophies will guide development of AI on the continent. The digital revolution’s ultimate legacy in security will be how it is used.” □

U.N. Peacekeeping Missions Face

NEW TESTS

*Critics Say Future Missions Must Adapt
to Produce Better Results for Host Countries*

ADF STAFF





The past two years have been hard ones for United Nations peacekeepers. The mission in Mali shut down suddenly. The mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has begun its shutdown, while missions in the Central African Republic and on the border of Sudan and South Sudan continue to face challenges.

In a 2023 study, research Professor Cedric de Coning of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs noted that no new U.N. peacekeeping missions have been deployed since 2014, other than special political missions. Missions in the CAR, the DRC and Mali, he noted, have been unable to “protect civilians at a scale matching the expectations raised by their mandates.”



Dozens of displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo gather along the fence of a base established by United Nations peacekeepers in 2021. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



United Nations peacekeepers patrol a street in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011. The 13-year mission there ended in 2017. REUTERS

U.N. officials say that some stakeholders in the past year had questioned whether there was any future at all for U.N. peacekeeping missions. IPI Global Observatory said there was a “prevalent sense that the U.N. would no longer deploy large multidimensional peacekeeping operations, which would be downsized in favor of lighter footprint political presences.” A December 2023 meeting of the U.N. Peacekeeping Ministerial showed that although there still is support for current and new peacekeeping missions, new approaches are needed.

The reasons for the failed missions are complicated. Critics say that the missions are sometimes viewed as

Senegalese peacekeepers exit an armored personnel carrier to conduct a patrol in Gao, Mali. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



an extension of the military of the host country and are blamed for its failures. Peacekeepers often have a hard time adapting to shifts in political and cultural dynamics. Groups such as Russia's mercenary Wagner Group — now calling itself Africa Corps — have meddled in peacekeeping operations and spread disinformation. Funding also is a problem, as yearslong peace missions can cost billions of dollars.

The U.N. has had successful peacekeeping missions in places such as in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. But the failures of the missions in the DRC and in Mali are forcing it to reassess how it conducts future missions.

"Over the years, U.N. peacekeeping mandates have become stretched and the responsibilities of peacekeepers sometimes blurred," wrote Claire Klobucista and Mariel Ferragamo for the Council on Foreign Relations in 2023. Their report included a study by the University of the Free State's Professor Theo Neethling, who noted that rather than monitoring peace as agreed upon by conflicting parties, some peacekeeping operations in Africa have been asked to protect facilities and infrastructure while undertaking counterinsurgency.

Still, studies show that peacekeeping missions save lives. Klobucista and Ferragamo noted that Georgetown University's Lise Howard had found that "peacekeepers correlate with fewer civilian casualties, and that more peacekeepers — particularly more diverse

peacekeepers — parallels both with fewer civilian deaths and fewer military deaths." One group of experts modeled scenarios with and without intervention and found that peacekeeping missions ultimately are a cost-effective measure whose contributions toward mitigating conflict and preventing spillover often are underestimated. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the U.N. chief of peace operations, also argues that the missions are underappreciated.

"[Peacekeepers] have helped many countries successfully navigate the difficult path from war to peace, from Liberia and Namibia to Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and many other countries," Lacroix told Deutsche Welle. He added that U.N. operations have a strong record of preventing and reducing violence and preventing wars from recurring.

TIME FOR CHANGE

The U.N. has been aware for some time that it must change. In 2018, it began the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and updated it in 2021. The initiative now includes priorities for future missions:

Collective coherence behind a political strategy. The strategy must encompass the mission and key partners, including regional organizations, member countries, international financial institutions and U.N. agencies. Missions also will use their convening power to bring the collective resources of all partners to bear.

Accountability to peacekeepers. There is a need to advance efforts to improve the safety, living conditions and well-being of peacekeepers.

Accountability of peacekeepers. The focus must be on conduct and discipline, with an emphasis on prevention, enforcement, remedial action, and strengthened support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The accountability must include the missions' environmental footprint and also recognize good performance.

Strategic communications. This must be integrated into planning cycles and risk management to promote successes and manage expectations. A renewed emphasis must be placed on combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.

Cooperation with host countries. Constructive engagement remains central to political solutions by increasing peacekeepers' safety and security, bolstering performance, and supporting successful transitions.

The initiative also includes two "cross cutting themes": the Women, Peace and Security agenda and "innovative, data-driven and technology-enabled peacekeeping."

'PEACE CANNOT BE IMPOSED'

Peacekeeping missions don't require that peace negotiations be underway. However, de Coning concluded that future peacekeeping missions have a better chance



A member of the South African National Defence Force raises a flag during a ceremony to commemorate the International Day of U.N. Peacekeepers in Bloemfontein, South Africa, on May 29, 2023. REUTERS

at success in countries that have established a viable peace process. He said future missions must begin with a proper political project in the works, noting that "peace cannot be imposed."

Some peacekeeping missions have been more about stabilization than peacekeeping, de Coning noted. A



United Nations peacekeepers from Ethiopia patrol in Abyei, a disputed territory between Sudan and South Sudan. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



United Nations peacekeepers from Rwanda wait to escort members of the U.N. Security Council as they arrive at the airport in Juba, South Sudan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

true peacekeeping mission should be to maintain a cease-fire or implement a peace agreement with the consent of all parties in the conflict. In stabilization missions, he said, the perception tends to be that the host nation is the sole beneficiary, while the dissenters and rebels are the enemy.

Future peacekeeping missions, de Coning said, will have to be more independent of the security forces of the host nation and not be viewed as simply additional capacity of the country's armed forces. He also warned of a phenomenon called the "stabilization dilemma" where a decrease in hostility takes away the incentive of the parties to negotiate.

Many past peacekeeping missions have lacked the mandate and the capacity to completely neutralize armed rebel groups. Instead, they inflicted damage to such groups, leaving them "disrupted but not defeated."

IDEAS FOR NEW MISSIONS

The U.N. continues to research how to improve peacekeeping missions. In his study, "The Future of UN Peace Operations in a Changing Conflict Environment," U.N. researcher Adam Day offered suggestions on how to rethink future missions:

Prepare for the long haul. Day noted that the average lifespan of peace operations has increased steadily over the past 30 years. Today, there are missions deployed for years with little prospect of producing a clear, sustainable peace. As the World Bank has noted, the kinds of social and political transformations needed to transition to successful democracies take decades. Setting deadlines and mandate periods for such missions is useful only for tracking mission progress.



United Nations peacekeepers recover bodies from an area near the site where a convoy was attacked in Nyiragongo, North Kivu province, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo loot the burned wreckage of a truck after they blocked and clashed with a convoy of United Nations peacekeepers near Goma in North Kivu province. REUTERS



Day noted that the U.N. might need to set more modest goals and look at what can be done through peacekeeping in a three-year timespan while planning what other U.N. components can accomplish in 20 years.

Reexamine the use of heavy force. During long-term civil wars in which there is no viable peace process, the contribution of troops using heavy force “is far less certain, while the costs are extremely high in both financial and human terms.” Sometimes, brute force is necessary to protect civilians and prevent atrocities, but this goal should be clearly stipulated and not confused with support for a peace process.

Day said that if future deployments include ongoing civil wars, asymmetric violence, and “chaotic admixtures” of mercenaries, militias and foreign forces, “the utility of UN peacekeeping soldiers should be seriously reviewed rather than presumed as necessary.”

Build innovative partnerships beyond the U.N. The U.N. has successfully partnered with regional organizations to increase the effectiveness of operations, such as with African Union troops in Somalia. If trends continue, the U.N. “will be even more sidelined in major conflicts and will need to invest even more heavily in partnerships than today,” Day said.

Day said partnerships could include working with an international financial institution to develop conflict-sensitive disaster response planning. “Or in the case of conflicts

involving transnational illicit networks, a peace operation might need to be linked to anti-trafficking organizations, or employ cyber-tracking experts,” he noted.

Build analytic capacity. Day noted that U.N. peace operations have significantly improved their analytic capacities, including the establishment of threat identification programs and emerging intelligence capacity.

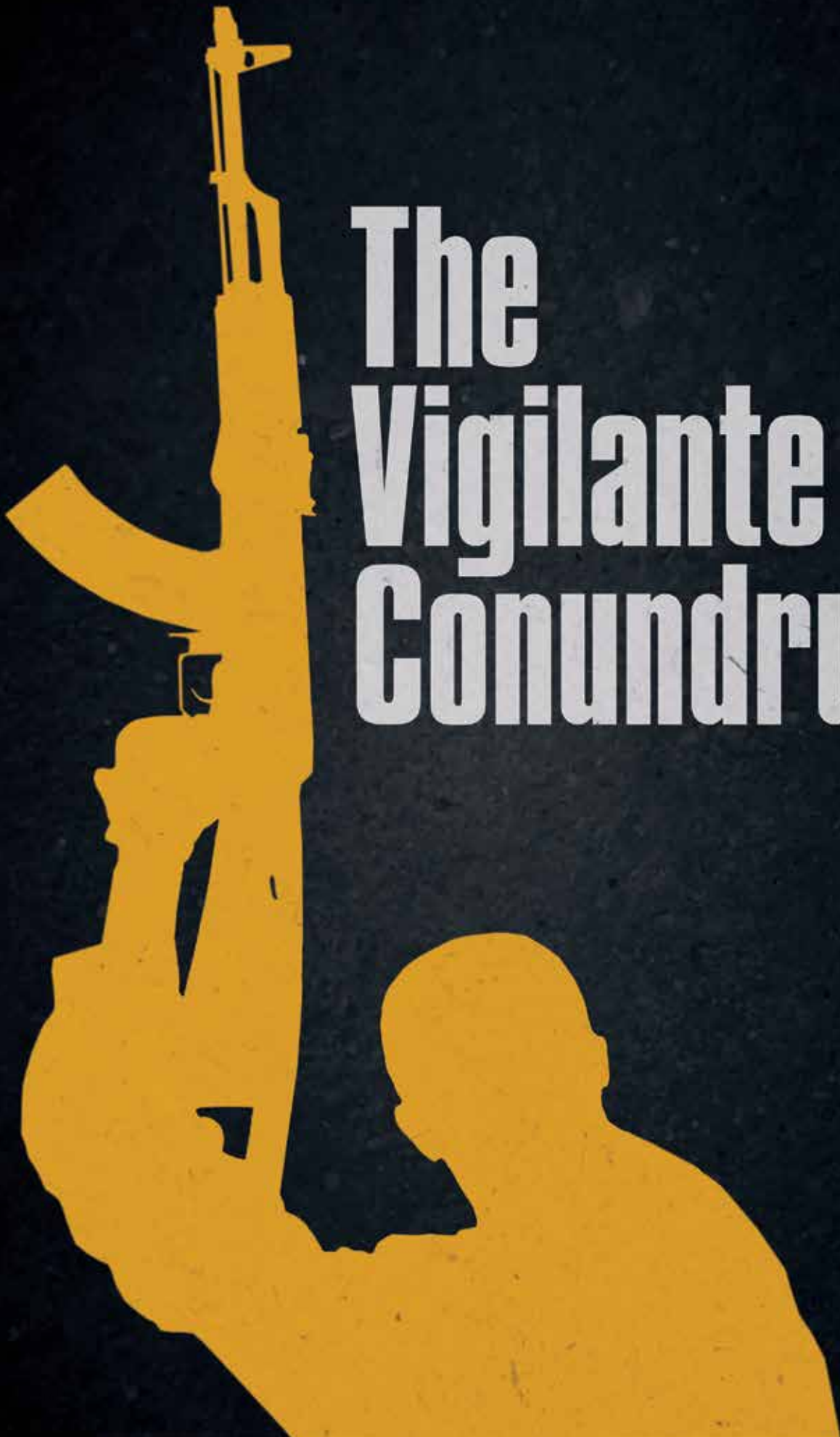
He added that future conflicts largely will be dictated by socioeconomic factors, such as climate change, global economic downturns, or deepening inequalities resulting from urbanization, uneven growth, and new technologies limited to those who can afford them.

“Building bespoke political economy analysis is an important first step; establishing more meaningful engagements with international and national financial institutions is another,” Day reported.

Embrace complexity. Day notes that missions will get more complicated because of climate change, demographic shifts and new technologies. But, he noted, there is a tendency to reduce narratives to simple terms, in part to communicate effectively with all parties involved. Over time, the U.N. will need to embrace the interrelated nature of conflicts more than it does today.

“Future peace operations may need to include climate change scientists, economists, urban planners, and social media experts, if they are to understand and affect the trajectories of violent conflict,” Day reported. □

The Vigilante Conundrum



GOVERNMENTS USE **ARMED CIVILIANS** TO FIGHT REBELS AND EXTREMISTS, BUT THE TACTIC COMES WITH A RANGE OF **CHALLENGES**

ADF STAFF

Immediately after Burkina Faso's National Assembly unanimously approved arming civilian volunteers to help battle extremists in January 2020, the risks were clear.

Despite two weeks of training, an age requirement of 18 and a "moral investigation," the tactic seemed fraught. "It's not a question of making cannon fodder," then-Defence Minister Chérif Sy said. "We want to prevent these volunteers from becoming militias."

Corrine Dufka, West Africa director for Human Rights Watch, citing documented instances of abuses by Burkinabe soldiers, had a dour outlook. "This new plan to subcontract security operations to civilians threatens to lead to even more abuses," she told Al Jazeera at the time.

Using armed civilians in the national security sector raises many questions: How can the government prevent poorly trained civilians from violating human rights? How will vigilantes avoid the temptation to attack rival ethnic groups? How will combatants distinguish between armed extremists and gun-toting civilians when the fog of battle descends? And how will governments that authorized arming civilians effectively disarm them when their services are no longer needed?

"The clearer vigilantes' objectives and mandate are set in advance, and the greater the oversight by national and local leaders, the state military and local communities, the more effective the group can be and the less likely it will veer away from community defence and counter-insurgency goals," said a 2017 International Crisis Group report.

However, the report continues, fragile states are more likely to depend on vigilantes and are less able to police them and prevent their abuses.

This held true in Burkina Faso. By June of 2020, a National Assembly report said there was an "inadequacy of resources" set aside to train, supervise and oversee the nation's Homeland Defence Volunteers (VDP), according



A sign marks a Civilian Joint Task Force sector checkpoint in Maiduguri, Nigeria. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

to a 2021 paper by Antonin Tisseron titled, "Pandora's box. Burkina Faso, self-defense militias and VDP Law in fighting jihadism."

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIGILANTE GROUPS

Burkina Faso is not the only nation on the continent to rely on armed civilians for security. Some efforts have improved security, but the risks seem to rival the benefits. Armed vigilante groups have a long history in Africa. Sierra Leone had a group called the Kamajors, who were armed to protect against Revolutionary United Front rebels in the 1990s. In Uganda, the Arrow Boys formed in 2005. They protected civilians from Lord's Resistance Army extremists.

Vigilantes are a subgroup of nonstate armed militias and are 'generally understood as groups which concerned citizens have joined for self-protection under conditions of local disorder.'



A Civilian Joint Task Force member frisks a man at the entrance to the town of Damasak, Nigeria.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Vigilantes are a subgroup of nonstate armed militias and are “generally understood as groups which concerned citizens have joined for self-protection under conditions of local disorder,” according to the 2023 report for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), “Understanding and Managing Vigilante Groups in the Lake Chad Basin Region.”

Vigilante groups, the authors wrote, are marked by three main characteristics: They tend to be large and have access to weapons; they have the ability to impose violence that could alter the balance of peace; and they are not part of formal state security institutions, although they might have some relations with such groups.

They also usually fit into three broad categories. Some organized to fight violent extremism, such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in northeast Nigeria. The CJTF is perhaps the most well-known group of its kind on the continent. Others form to fight crime. The third type is “manipulated by the state to target ethnic, religious or political rivals,” the report states.

The CJTF formed in the aftermath of the April 2013 Baga massacre, in which Nigerian soldiers were found to have killed up to 200 civilians and burned 2,000 homes and businesses after a Boko Haram attack on a military post, the UNDP report states. That attack killed a soldier.

Men wait to enroll in the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

“Puzzlingly, what happened next was not a radicalization of the victimized civilians in Borno State, but the rise of anti-Boko Haram vigilantes eager to work with the Nigerian security forces in the volatile state to both repel Boko Haram extremists and protect their communities,” the report states.

The CJTF is thought to have up to 30,000 members spread throughout Borno State. After the government formally recognized the group in 2013, the state-sponsored Borno Youth Empowerment Scheme enrolled 1,850 CJTF members in a four-week paramilitary training course. Some trained at Ghana’s Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. CJTF members also got a \$48 monthly stipend. Initially, the vigilantes were armed with bows and arrows, knives, machetes, and sticks. Eventually, some were trained and allowed to carry pump-action shotguns.

In the beginning, the CJTF recorded significant victories against insurgents, which helped drive Boko Haram from Maiduguri, according to a report for ADF by Dr. Ernest Ogozor, a Nigerian expert on countering violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin.

Civilian Joint Task Force members patrol in Maiduguri, Nigeria. REUTERS



After some success, the group came to be associated with killing suspects, using children in their ranks, bribery and extortion at checkpoints, cattle rustling, dealing in stolen goods, and exploiting women, the UNDP report states. CJTF vigilantes also have been credibly accused of torturing Boko Haram militants and other captives during questioning.

Burkina Faso's government-sponsored VDP forces have suffered heavy casualties in their fight against violent extremists, according to a December 2023 report by International Crisis Group. Civilians are caught in the middle of the fighting. President Ibrahim Traoré, an army captain who took power in a September 2022 coup, has recruited and armed up to 50,000 additional VDPs, marking a significant increase in the use of armed civilians against Islamic State group and al-Qaida-backed extremists, which the military has failed to contain.

In addition to being pushed to the front lines with inadequate training, some of these Burkinabe fighters are targeting civilians, such as ethnic Fulani, who largely have been left unrecruited because they are thought to collude with extremists. The presence of VDPs also exposes noncombatants to extremist reprisals.

"Now that the authorities have placed VDPs at the heart of their security plan, they cannot instantly backtrack without the risk of undermining security," the Crisis Group report noted. "In addition, the VDPs are an important base for President Traoré."

The Democratic Republic of the Congo government

also is relying on help from armed civilian militias. President Félix Tshisekedi called on young people in November 2022 to organize "vigilance groups" and support the army against M23 rebels in the east.

News website Afrikarabia reports that the "Wazalendo" most likely is an amalgamation of eight to 10 armed groups using the name, which means "patriots" in Kiswahili. Researcher Henry-Pacifique Mayala told Afrikarabia that "when we see the intensity of the fighting and their duration, it seems clear that the Wazalendo have been equipped with weapons and ammunition, and benefit from logistical support."

Civilian groups may support the government initially in fights against extremists and other militias, but arming them comes with many risks. Uganda-based security analyst David Egesa told Anadolu Agency news service that armed groups might be able to help defend against the M23 in the short term, but it could also strengthen militia groups. The DRC "might discreetly allow the militia to work together against M23," he said. "But such a twisted game could, in the longer term, embolden the militias ... it's a dangerous situation."

MANAGING ARMED GROUPS

The UNDP report on Lake Chad Basin armed civilians notes that "government neglect of vigilante frustrations and expectations can be a recipe for trouble. ... For better or worse, vigilantes are here to stay."



Hundreds of volunteers sing as they wait outside the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Goma International Airport in November 2022 before boarding a plane for a training center. AFF/GETTY IMAGES

Again, Burkina Faso's experience confirms these concerns. Before the formation of the VDP, extremists mostly targeted state security forces and its representatives, according to a 2021 report by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. Now civilian auxiliary forces are primary targets. In the first six months of 2021, extremists killed about 200 civilian volunteers — more than the number of Burkinabe soldiers killed during the same period.

This validates early concerns that establishing the VDP would redirect insurgent violence toward civilians.

Despite the many risks associated with the use of volunteer civilian forces, the UNDP report offers 13 guidelines to manage and oversee such groups “as well as to mitigate their adverse effects on civilians in conflict.” A sampling of those guidelines includes:

- **Ensure regulation and oversight:** This can include codes of conduct and rules of engagement.
- **Offer nonlethal assistance:** Support can include metal detectors, safety equipment, mobile phones and transport.
- **Increase accountability:** Authorities must investigate all credible allegations of human rights violations, crime and abuse. This should include actions undertaken with state security forces. Justice should be swift and transparent.
- **Prohibit the use of child combatants:** Vigilantes must not be allowed to recruit and use children. In

Borno State, Nigeria, the CJTF and the U.N. agreed to a 2017 action plan to prohibit the use of children.

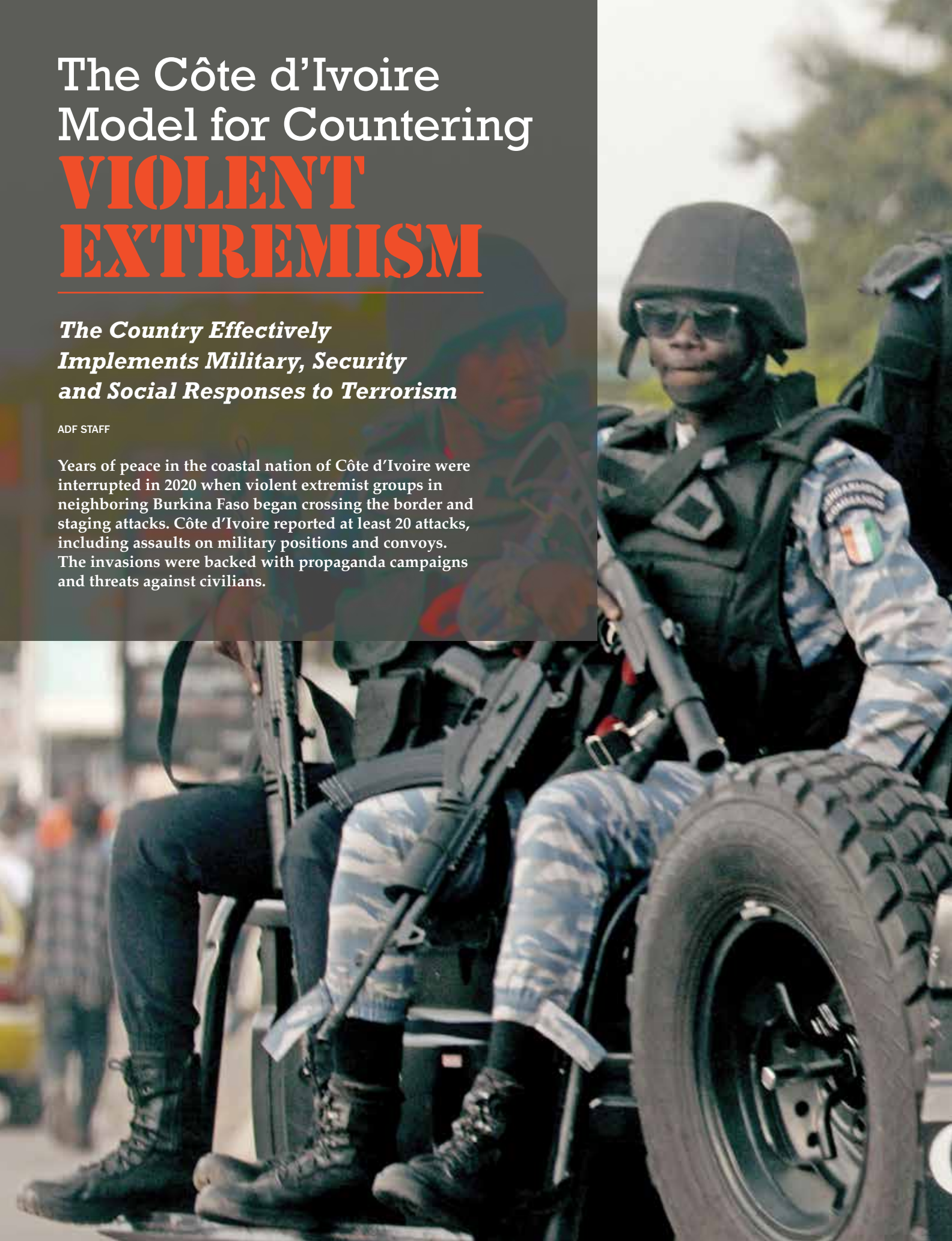
- **Limit vigilantes to intelligence gathering:** Most vigilante groups already are used for this purpose. Limiting their role to defensive measures such as screening people and goods avoids the many problems inherent with arming them.
- **Vet group members:** Doing so will weed out criminals and those with a record of complaints by community members.
- **Compensate them adequately:** Recognize service with health care, education and “sustainable livelihood assistance.” Those who exhibit exceptional behavior could be considered for enlistment in more formal police units. Be clear up front about expectations and availability regarding compensation.
- **Establish and fund clear demobilization plans:** Once violence ends, vigilantes will have to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated. Resources should help vigilantes find jobs in locally relevant sectors. Group members should take part in creating these programs. □

The Côte d'Ivoire Model for Countering **VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

*The Country Effectively
Implements Military, Security
and Social Responses to Terrorism*

ADF STAFF

Years of peace in the coastal nation of Côte d'Ivoire were interrupted in 2020 when violent extremist groups in neighboring Burkina Faso began crossing the border and staging attacks. Côte d'Ivoire reported at least 20 attacks, including assaults on military positions and convoys. The invasions were backed with propaganda campaigns and threats against civilians.





Ivoirian security forces ride in a transport vehicle in Abidjan.
REUTERS

The country was prepared for the violence, researcher William Assanvo wrote in a 2023 report for the Institute for Security Studies. Côte d'Ivoire already had measures in the pipeline to address the problem. It had developed a national counterterrorism strategy in 2018, and at about the same time, established an information program to counter attempts at imposing radical religious interpretations.

Terrorists have wreaked havoc on Mali and are trying to expand across the Sahel and further south. Côte d'Ivoire, with its strong economy and its modern port in Abidjan, would be an important conquest for extremists. The main terrorist threat in Côte d'Ivoire comes from al-Qaida affiliate Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin. The group mainly operates in the Sahel, including Burkina Faso and Mali, but has extended its range across the Burkinabe border with northern and northeastern Côte d'Ivoire. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reports that as extremist groups in the Sahel move southward, Côte d'Ivoire "has beefed up its security deployment in the north and rolled out a range of social projects to alleviate poverty and youth unemployment."

Côte d'Ivoire is small, and its economy remains largely dependent on the production of cocoa beans and palm oil. But it is otherwise a dynamo of commerce and development. The port in Abidjan is one of West Africa's largest and most modern. The country's telecommunications network includes the locally made Open G smartphone, which can handle 16 local languages. The country now has West Africa's second-strongest economy, after Nigeria.

Côte d'Ivoire's problems with terrorism mostly originate with Mali. A 2021 Chatham House report notes that Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger "have suffered from successive weak governments characterized by corruption, impunity, and disorganization."

"In Mali, the army and allied militias committed atrocities in the central and southern regions in 2018 and 2019 but no trials of perpetrators ever took place," the report said. "This lack of accountability and justice helped stoke hostilities between nation governments in the Sahel and their marginalized, poor, and neglected communities. Their elites have failed to provide security for vast sections of the population."

As extremists continue to expand through northern and central Mali and into Burkina Faso, as many as 1 in 11 residents has been displaced, the ICG reports.

The government began restoring political stability through economic growth in 2011 after

nearly a decade of civil conflict ended with a weakened military and infrastructure. At the same time, the ICG noted, far-reaching security-sector reforms enabled authorities "to build a military able to ward off the jihadist violence scarring the Sahel."

Since last attacked, Côte d'Ivoire has boosted the military and security presence in the Savanes and Zanzan districts that border Mali and Burkina Faso. Côte d'Ivoire continues to work with its neighbors under the Accra Initiative to detect and disrupt regional terrorism.

In 2021, Côte d'Ivoire inaugurated its International Academy to Combat Terrorism. The 1,100-hectare campus in Jacqueville sits 50 kilometers outside Abidjan and includes a school for government officials, a training center for special forces and a research institute. Ivoirian and French leaders created the counter-terror training program in 2017. The facility has training modules for police, military, customs officials and prison administrators.

The opening ceremony took place three days after extremists attacked a security station in the northern city of Tougbo, killing one Ivoirian Soldier. The attack was the third in that region in two months.

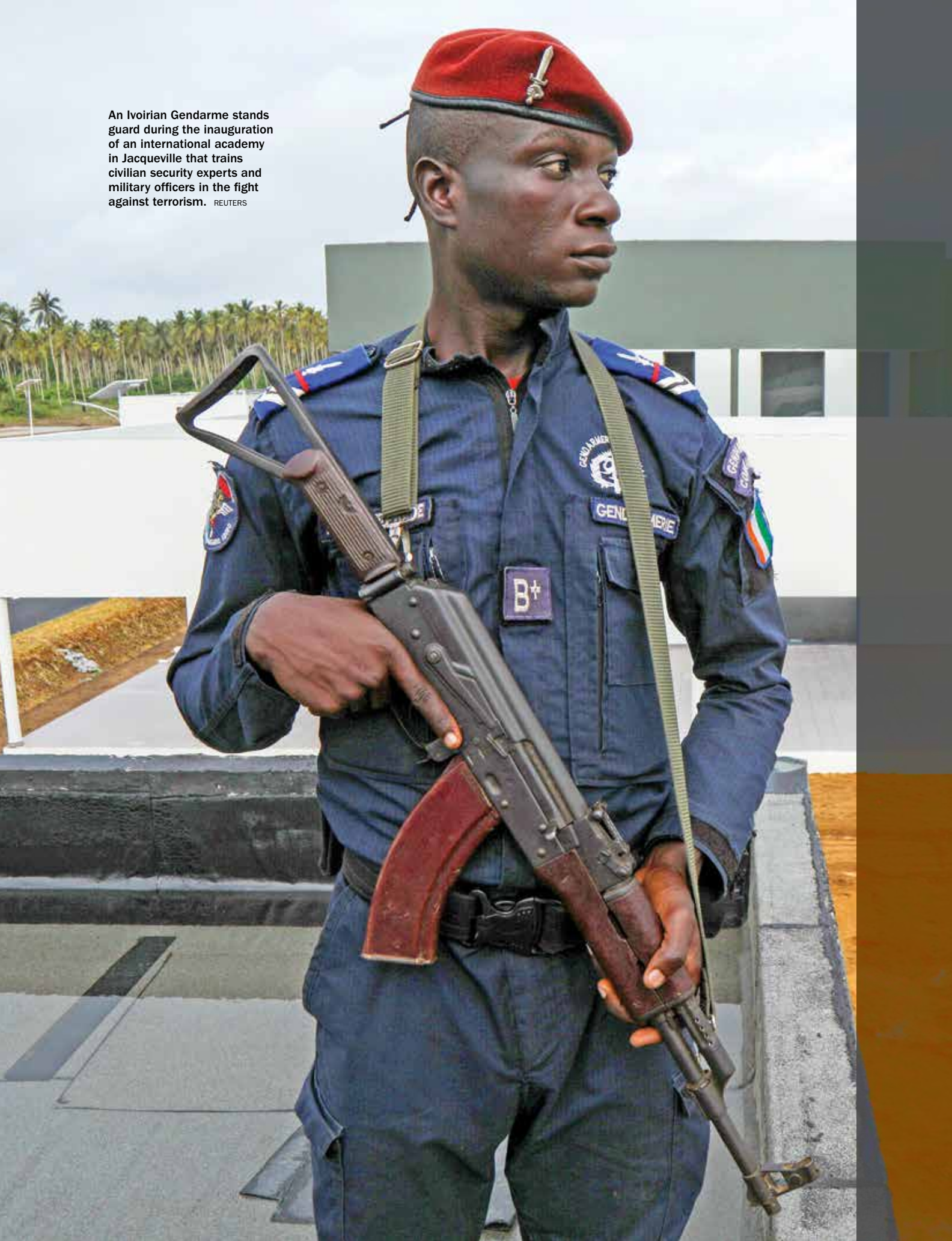
Building A National Strategy

Côte d'Ivoire has become a leader in Africa in developing a national strategy to stop terrorism. Its steps have included:

- A national initiative to fight money laundering and terrorism financing.
- The construction of army bases and the deployment of counterterrorism units along its northern borders with Mali and Burkina Faso.
- Cooperation with other nations in arresting extremists and handing them over to Mali, which has led to increased security measures and anti-terror patrols in the region.

The country continues to build and refine its measures to keep extremism at bay. In January 2022, then-Prime Minister Patrick Achi launched a special program to keep terrorists from recruiting young people from border regions. Jeune Afrique reported that the program was designed to "prevent them from rallying jihadist groups in these areas where the feeling of abandonment by the State is present." At the end of 2022, about 23,000 young people had been integrated into the project, with a goal of 66,000 members in 2024. The program develops

An Ivorian Gendarme stands guard during the inauguration of an international academy in Jacqueville that trains civilian security experts and military officers in the fight against terrorism. REUTERS





Ivoirian Soldiers arrive during the inauguration of the International Academy for Combating Terrorism in Jacqueville on June 10, 2021. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

apprenticeships and other employment opportunities for its members.

The project is just one way Côte d'Ivoire has remained free of terrorist attacks for more than two years. The total commitment includes a combination of military intervention, enhanced security and greater investment in border areas.

"The goal is to reverse perceptions among border communities that the state has abandoned them," Assanvo wrote. "Doing so will reduce the risk that they are exploited by insurgents."

In 2022, Côte d'Ivoire joined with neighbors in West Africa's Accra Initiative to create the 10,000-person Multinational Joint Task Force/Accra Initiative, modeled on a similar task force operating in the Lake Chad Basin. In addition to security, the program invests in education and health care, along with key infrastructure such as roads and drinking water. The African Development Bank

provided \$10.53 million in 2022 to help provide electricity to 71,600 households and more than 7,100 business centers in Côte d'Ivoire's Savanes, Zanzan and Woroba districts. The electrification program is part of a larger effort to reduce poverty in the north and, by extension, the temptation toward radicalization.

"Depending on whether it reduces structural vulnerabilities and fragility in the country's north, the social program could — by complementing military and security operations — reduce current and future threats," Assanvo wrote.

Even with its successes, the country has no room for complacency. Russia's mercenary Wagner Group, which now calls itself Africa Corps, has made no secret of its desire to expand its military influence into new parts of Africa, especially Côte d'Ivoire. Wagner already is firmly embedded in the Central African Republic, where it is part of the



Workers assemble an Open G smartphone, which can speak 16 Ivorian languages, at a factory in Grand Bassam. REUTERS



The central business district of Plateau in the port city of Abidjan is an engine for Côte d'Ivoire's growing economy. REUTERS

country's presidential security team. Wagner also supported coups in Burkina Faso and Mali.

"Increasingly, it appears that the Wagner Group has its sights on three other West African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone and [Côte d'Ivoire]," researcher Michael Rubin wrote for the American Enterprise Institute in early 2023. "Each has suffered past unrest. Whereas often United Nations peacekeeping missions cost billions of dollars, extend decades, and achieve only marginal results, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and [Côte d'Ivoire] ... are the three countries the U.N. points to as the exception that proves the rule."

José Naranjo, writing for *El País* in January 2024, noted that the country's main challenge is to spread its newfound wealth to all its citizens.

"From 2015 to 2020, the poverty rate decreased from 46% to 39%, indicating a significant portion of the population still faces severe

challenges," he reported. "In cities like Abidjan, the high cost of living is a common complaint due to inflation hovering around 4%. The impact of Covid-19 and the Ukraine war has exacerbated inflation in recent years." And, he noted, the government announced a 10% increase in electricity rates.

The International Crisis Group says that Côte d'Ivoire's twin focus on security and economic development "is yielding important dividends for the population in the north." The country should increase social investments and keep building trust between the military and civilians. Côte d'Ivoire, the group said, should continue to build its critical relationship with Burkina Faso and support multilateral intelligence-sharing initiatives. Côte d'Ivoire also should continue to build cooperative relationships with Benin, Ghana and Togo, among others. □



Zambian Mechanics Train in U.S.

DEFENCEWEB

Mechanics from Zambia spent a week in the United States learning how to maintain Enstrom turbine-powered 480B helicopters. Zambia's Ministry of Defence signed a contract in 2023 for two of the helicopters which will be used as trainers, as well as in missions such as anti-poaching and public safety.

Enstrom regularly offers maintenance courses throughout the year at its factory in Menominee, Michigan. Participants practice what they learn with hands-on display models and special tools.

The Zambia Air Force's new helicopters will be based in Lusaka and used for training and utility missions. A training package is included in the deal. The helicopters will be equipped with cargo hooks and camera mounts and avionics. One helicopter will be supplied with a full glass cockpit and one with a hybrid glass and analog panel to provide training with a flight deck.

The Enstrom 480B is the company's flagship aircraft. It

Helicopter mechanics from Zambia toured Menominee, Michigan, during their training. ENSTROM HELICOPTER CORP.

was developed to U.S. Army New Training Helicopter specifications. It is 9.2 meters long with a five-seat cabin configuration and litter-carrying capabilities. Military and government operators using the 480B include the Czech Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand and Venezuela.

South Africa's Safomar Aviation Group coordinated and assisted Enstrom in the sale to Zambia, including logistics, specifications and configuration of the helicopters. Safomar operates a large regional maintenance, repair and overhaul facility and a flight school. It also maintains and operates Enstrom helicopters throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Safomar has assisted in the sale of three Enstrom 480B helicopters to Botswana's police service. The last of these was delivered in early 2021.

MOROCCO TO ACQUIRE APACHE HELICOPTERS

DEFENCEWEB

Boeing has started manufacturing the first of 24 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for Morocco ahead of deliveries to the North African nation beginning in 2024.

Preparations are underway at the Khouribga military base to accommodate the new Apaches. Morocco in June 2020 ordered 24 AH-64Es in a deal worth \$440 million after requesting the aircraft in late 2019. The contract is expected to conclude by March 2025.



Boeing is building the new Moroccan Apaches under a contract with the U.S. Army through the U.S. government's Foreign Military Sales process. The AH-64E that Morocco has ordered features an improved modern target acquisition designation system that provides day, night and all-weather target information, and night vision navigation capability. In addition to classifying ground and air targets, Boeing said the fire control radar has been updated to operate in a maritime environment.

Morocco has been seeking a new attack helicopter for some time. Morocco's military has no dedicated attack helicopter, instead relying on two dozen Gazelles, which are flown by Army Aviation and the Royal Moroccan Air Force.

Morocco also is acquiring other military aviation assets from the U.S., including 25 F-16C/D Block 72 fighter jets to replace the Mirage F1s it received in the 1970s, the Northrop F-5E/FTiger IIs it received in the 1980s, and to augment and eventually replace the F-16C/Ds it received in 2011.

Egypt Launches Fourth Meko Frigate

DEFENCEWEB

Alexandria Shipyard has launched the Egyptian Navy's first locally built Meko A200 frigate, the fourth overall for the North African nation.

The Al-Jabbar was launched on December 4, 2023, with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi attending the ceremony.

Alexandria Shipyard said manufacture and assembly of the first Meko A200 took two years. Egypt has positioned itself among the few countries to manufacture large military vessels, it said. "Today we celebrate the inauguration and launching of the first Meko A200 stealth frigate by 100% Egyptian hands."

The shipyard added that "the launching and sailing of Egyptian frigates are now an undeniable reality, underscoring that Egypt is advancing full throttle ... to boost the Egyptian position in the field of military production, meeting international standards by Egyptian hands."

Egypt ordered four structurally identical vessels from ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems, with the first three units being



produced in Germany and the fourth vessel built in Egypt. The contract was signed in September 2018.

ThyssenKrupp handed over the second Meko A200, Al-Qahhar, in May 2023 after work began in December 2019. The first-of-class ship Al-Aziz was handed over in October 2022. The third frigate was launched in April 2022.

Each of Egypt's new Meko frigates is 121 meters long with a top speed of 29 knots. The four Meko frigates ultimately will replace the aging Oliver Hazard Perry-class vessels that compose the bulk of the Egyptian Navy's escort fleet.

NIGERIAN NAVY TO HARNESS AI ADF STAFF

The Nigerian Navy aims to use artificial intelligence to strengthen its operational capacity and keep pace with evolving technological advancements in the maritime industry.

Chief of the Naval Staff Vice Adm. Emmanuel Ogalla made the announcement during the presentation of a paper by navy participants at the National Defence College. Ogalla said the Nigerian Navy is embracing AI because it and other emerging technologies increasingly are used in ship construction.

"The Nigerian Navy must continue to adopt and integrate these technologies in order to maintain a competitive edge during operations," Ogalla said in a report by Nigerian newspaper Leadership.

AI can improve a Navy's decision-making processes, such as predicting the most fuel-efficient way to operate a vessel. It can be included in a ship's navigation system, radar operations or threat-detection systems to help operators process information faster.

The technology has grown in popularity as threats in the maritime domain have multiplied and become increasingly complex.



Nigerian Navy vessels sail in formation with a U.S. ship during a three-day maritime engagement.

PETTY OFFICER 3RD CLASS MALACHI LAKEY/U.S. NAVY

"Navies and warships in general have had a high degree of automation for a long time, with the most commonplace use of AI being in the Combat Management System (CMS)," Matthew Caris, senior director at Avascent, a global strategy consulting company, told Armada International.

In automatic mode, CMS can detect a target and identify, classify and prioritize targets before deploying weapons, although people are involved in decisions about when and how to use weapons.

Harnessing AI and other technologies will help the Nigerian Navy more effectively respond to a range of maritime threats such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU); drug smuggling; and piracy. Nigeria now loses about \$70 million annually to IUU fishing perpetrated by a host of foreign fleets, mostly Chinese.

It is a scourge that plagues West Africa, the world's epicenter for IUU fishing. It costs the region an estimated \$10 billion a year, according to a 2023 report by the Stimson Center, a think tank.

Africa Needs **'Human Firewall'** to Protect Against Cybercrime

ADF STAFF

The rapid expansion of digital technology in recent years has left millions of Africans vulnerable to cybercriminals seeking to scam them, their companies, and even their governments out of money and personal information.

The problem is so pervasive that, according to some estimates, such crimes can cost African countries up to 10% of their gross domestic product each year.

“Cyber threats are more sophisticated and complex than ever and evolving quickly with new technology like AI [artificial intelligence] becoming increasingly advanced every day,” Stu Sjouwerman, CEO of South African cybersecurity company KnowBe4, wrote recently for the online publication ITWeb.

Looking ahead, Sjouwerman urges African businesses and government leaders to focus on strengthening what he calls the “human firewall” by educating computer and mobile phone users about the risks they face from online fraud. The techniques used include phishing — sending authentic-seeming emails or links that can trick an unsuspecting recipient into unintentionally breaching a computer system’s security.

Investing in the human firewall is crucial because African nations are facing a severe shortfall of trained cybersecurity experts. Microsoft’s Digital Defense Report

As Africa faces an array of cyber threats, experts are calling for awareness campaigns and education to help computer users protect themselves.

shows that the demand for cybersecurity skills has grown by an average of 36% over the past year in South Africa alone.

“This gaping hole in skills shortage is not going to be filled any time soon, leaving organizations vulnerable to cyberattacks,” Sjouwerman wrote.

The same report identifies China, North Korea and Russia as major sources of global cybersecurity threats. However, national governments are not the only source of online attacks.

Transnational criminal networks use rogue programmers to create malware that invades computer systems. So-called cybercrime-as-a-service operators can help malicious actors hold water and power systems hostage or rob telecommunications companies of their lucrative trove of customers’ personal data.

African countries vary greatly in the severity of cybersecurity threats they face. Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa routinely rank among the African countries experiencing the highest number of online attacks.

Cybercriminals Target Maritime Sector

ADF STAFF

Cybercriminals targeted a shipping company or maritime entity once every three days in late 2023. That figure is rising and requires extra vigilance by African security professionals, experts say.

Among those sounding the alarm are the leaders of the Regional Maritime Information Fusion Center in Antananarivo, Madagascar, which relays alerts of maritime threats around the East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) region.

“Cybercrime is an emerging threat to maritime security that is beginning to gain the upper hand, and in the ESA-IO



Maritime security officials are sounding the alarm about the need for extra cybersecurity in the face of attacks that can compromise vessel communications systems, navigation and more. REUTERS

region it is creeping up on us,” said Lt. Saïd Lavani, Comoran international liaison officer at the center.

Maritime operational technology and fleet operations management are almost entirely digital, meaning cyberattacks can compromise a wide range of systems, including

vessel communications, management of cargo and ballast water, and engine monitoring and control. The average cost of such attacks rose 200% worldwide in 18 months to more than \$550,000 per incident.

Navigation and long-range communication systems also are at risk. As shipping companies increasingly use advanced satellite communications such as low Earth orbit networks to improve connectivity, they also expose backdoor vulnerabilities to online criminals, according to a report by law firm Holman Fenwick Willan and maritime cybersecurity company CyberOwl.

Some of the continent’s coastal and island territories are stepping up to fight cyber threats. The Indian Ocean Cybersecurity Observatory on Réunion Island launched an awareness campaign in late October 2023. The observatory aims to create a community in the fields of data protection and raise awareness of maritime cybersecurity issues.

Kenya Announces \$236 Million Military Modernization Initiative

ADF STAFF

The Kenyan government has announced major investments in weapons and equipment to modernize its military. The country will spend about 7 billion Kenyan shillings (\$45 million) annually for five years to acquire tactical vehicles, drones and other modern defense tools, according to the interior ministry.

Part of the investment will include buying drones to monitor border and coastal areas that have been plagued by bandits and terrorists.

The first batch of equipment was to include mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles, aerial surveillance

kits, and personal protective gear.

Interior Cabinet Secretary Kithure Kindiki said a major goal of the investment is to better protect security professionals as they do their jobs.

“We have taken a decision to upscale and revitalise the equipment modernisation programme and acquire more air and land assets as well as personal protective equipment to enable you to perform your work better and efficiently,” Kindiki told the Star. “When you are protecting your fellow citizens, your own lives must also be protected from danger.”

In total, the Kenyan government will spend \$236 million for the modernization initiative.



The Kenyan contingent in the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia receives new mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles. Kenya is investing in additional high-tech military equipment to protect its forces. KENYA DEFENCE FORCES



Rwanda Relies on 'KIGALI PRINCIPLES' to Limit Civilian Harm in Mozambique

ADF STAFF

During its more than two-year intervention in Mozambique, Rwandan and allied forces liberated 90% of the troubled Cabo Delgado region from the grip of extremists.

Ralph Shield, a conflict researcher with the U.S. Naval War College, studied the actions of the 2,500 Rwandan Soldiers and police officers and found that they pursued militants while still exercising discretion in the use of force to avoid civilian harm. In fact, he found, Rwanda was deployed to Mozambique for an entire year before inflicting its first recorded civilian fatality.

Shield pointed to three factors he believes helped Rwanda fight the insurgency while protecting civilians.

Winning civilian support: Rwandan forces, when on patrol, make it a point to interact with the local population and ask about their security needs. The troops speak Swahili, which is the primary language in the far north of Mozambique. Rwanda also emphasizes something it calls “umuganda,” or community work, in which Soldiers work with civilians on public projects such as wells.

Restrained use of firepower: Shield’s research shows that Rwandan forces exhibited “tactical restraint” while on patrol. They did not rely on less-precise air power or artillery to target insurgents.

An environment conducive to success: Rwandan forces benefited from the fact that, when they first

Rwandan Soldiers prepare to board a plane for an intervention in Mozambique. The country has earned praise for its counterinsurgency efforts, which have prioritized civilian protection. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

deployed, much of the population had fled the towns in Cabo Delgado where they operated. This made it easier to avoid harming civilians. Additionally, the insurgents rarely used improvised explosive devices and did not launch suicide bomb attacks.

Rwanda’s posture is based on “The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians,” a set of 18 guidelines created in 2015, enumerating the ways peacekeepers should act to protect the population and prevent mass atrocities. The principles were born out of lessons from Rwanda’s history when, in 1994, U.N. peacekeepers did not act to stop a genocide.

“When we talk about use of force, it tends to be misconstrued as recklessness,” Rwandan Gen. Patrick Nyamvumba, then-chief of defense staff, said in 2016 during a speech at the U.S. Institute of Peace. “The worst examples that we’ve seen, whether it’s Rwanda or whether it’s Srebrenica, you had peacekeepers, things happened in their presence, and they didn’t take action. All we are saying is ‘OK, that was then, we can’t afford to do that now.’”



SENEGAL SENDS MESSAGE TO TRAFFICKERS WITH MAJOR COCAINE SEIZURES

ADF STAFF

A string of drug seizures by the Senegalese Navy demonstrates the uptick in trafficking in West Africa and the determination of security forces to shut down the routes.

In late December 2023, the Senegalese Navy seized 690 kilograms of cocaine being transported to Europe in an ultra-fast boat and arrested five Spanish nationals on board. This took place after two seizures, each of about 3 metric tons, in busts on November 28 and December 16, 2023.

“In recent years drug seizures on the high seas have become more frequent,” wrote the Senegalese newspaper *Le Quotidien*. “This latest operation, undertaken by the National Navy in the fight against drug trafficking shows it has become better equipped with the acquisition of modern patrol boats.”

Senegal acquired two of an expected three offshore patrol vessels delivered by the French shipbuilder Pirou. The first vessel, which arrived in July 2023, already has intercepted dozens of vessels trafficking narcotics, according to a report by *defenceWeb*.

Long considered a transit zone for drugs, West and Central Africa have become regions where consumption and addiction are more common, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Seizures in the region dropped to negligible amounts in 2018 before rising sharply in 2019 and subsequent years. Between 2019 and 2023, officials seized 80 metric tons of cocaine in West Africa.

The UNODC estimates that 30 to 40 metric tons of cocaine and heroin move through West Africa each year with a street value of \$1.25 billion.

“Drug traffickers and organized criminal groups are taking advantage of the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel to explore new routes and markets,” said Dr. Amado Philip de Andrés, UNODC regional representative for West and Central Africa. “This traffic affects the health of millions of people in the region and fuels conflicts by financing Sahelian armed groups.”

Security officials display some of the 3 metric tons of cocaine seized from a vessel in Senegalese waters on November 28, 2023.

MARINE NATIONALE SENEGALAISE

GHANA ENTERS ‘NEW ERA’ WITH PLANS FOR NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

ADF STAFF

Ghanaian leaders hailed the importance of military education and training as classes have commenced at a new war college and plans are underway to establish a full university system.

President Nana Akufo-Addo laid out his vision for the National Defence University during his address at a November 17, 2023, graduation parade at the Ghana Military Academy (GMA) in Teshie, Accra.

“The university will be a multidisciplinary higher education institution that would educate personnel of the armed forces, other security agencies, governmental departments and agencies, and foreign military personnel,” he said.

The university, he said, will offer an overarching structure for Ghana’s other institutions of higher education within the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), with campuses at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, National College of Defence Studies (NCDS), GMA, and the Ghana Armed Forces Training and Doctrine Command.



Maj. Gen. Irvine Aryeetey, left, commandant of Ghana’s National College of Defence Studies, and Chief of the Defence Staff Vice Adm. Seth Amoama share a plaque honoring the school’s inauguration on November 30, 2023.

GHANA NEWS AGENCY

The university will offer programs at master’s and doctoral levels to officers and civilians working within national security and defense establishments, ministries, departments, and agencies in Ghana and to students from other African countries.

Chief of the Defence Staff Vice Adm. Seth Amoama spoke at the inauguration of Ghana’s new war college, the NCDS, on November 30, 2023, at Burma Camp in Accra. He told senior officers that the NCDS was one piece of the GAF’s efforts to boost military capabilities and readiness.

“The program of this college aims to produce graduates imbued with leadership, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, required to address Ghana and Africa’s complex security challenges,” he said.

NCDS Commandant Maj. Gen. Irvine Aryeetey hailed the occasion, calling it the start of a new era for the GAF.

“The NCDS will not be merely a place of learning but a symbol of our commitment to safeguarding our nation’s sovereignty and ensuring the safety and security of our people,” he said.

U.N. Wants Special Armor for Women

UNITED NATIONS

The United States representative to the United Nations has announced a pledge of \$3 million to support a body armor pilot program for women.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield joined partners from Ghana, the Netherlands and Zambia to support this first-of-its-kind project intended to address inadequate personal protective equipment provided for female peacekeepers and increase their ability to meaningfully participate in peacekeeping missions.

“One major barrier to entry? The ‘unisex’ personal protective equipment that simply doesn’t fit women peacekeepers,” she said.

Women-specific body armor features a tailored cut, rounded chest, shortened torso and adjustable back that provides better coverage of vital organs. The purpose of this pilot project is to evaluate the degree to which the equipment enhances operations and safety during training and deployment. This project aims to reduce barriers to women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in peace operations.

Thomas-Greenfield said an investment in this armor is an investment in women and the communities they serve. She emphasized that “it’s long past time that we empower and protect these peacekeepers as they dedicate their lives to empowering and protecting civilians in conflict.”

Armored female Rwandan peacekeepers provide protection in Juba, South Sudan. The U.N. says women need body armor designed to better fit and protect them.

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN



U.N. Opens High-Tech Training Facility in Uganda

ADF STAFF

The United Nations has opened a Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT) facility for peacekeepers at its regional service center in Entebbe, Uganda. It is the first of its kind in Africa.

Students train at the United Nations Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda.

UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE ENTEBBE

The facility is part of the U.N. Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) Academy for Peace Operations. Instructors lead the facility’s online classes. The Observer of Uganda reported that the facility “allows real-time collaboration and offers accessibility to subject matter experts, creates an immersive learning experience, enables tracking and measurement of success, reduces costs, and increases training capacity.”

A C4ISR system can include an online command and control post, servers and workstations that interface with nearby ground vehicles, aircraft and Soldiers gathering information.

Participants can collaborate online with no constraints on location or time. Paulin Djomo, the director of the U.N. Regional Service Center in Entebbe, told The Independent of Kampala that the new system will improve the U.N.’s capacity for setting up and sustaining peacekeeping operations while improving the performance, safety and security of peacekeepers. The center will cater to more than 16,000 staff members in peacekeeping and political offices throughout Africa.

“VILT employs online platforms for interactive sessions and enables real-time collaboration among participants,” Djomo told The Observer. “With VILT, we do not have to fly in participants from all over the world but we can have them receive instructions from their duty stations and locations with the feel of being inside the training room.”

Women Expand Role in Peacekeeping

UNITED NATIONS

For more than a year, a group of United Nations peacekeepers from Ghana led by Capt. Esinam Baah regularly patrolled the “blue line,” or the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel. They visited neighborhoods in the area, checking in with families to make sure they were safe.

In 2022, Baah was one of the 173 Ghanaian female peacekeepers who served in the U.N. Interim Mission in Lebanon. She also was one of the 6,200 uniformed female peacekeepers — military and police personnel — serving in the world’s 12 peacekeeping missions. These women often are seen as a beacon of hope and protection for millions of civilians, many of them women and girls, who are struggling to keep safe while helping to rebuild their lives and communities after conflict.

“There are some in the town who are not very comfortable with an unknown man talking to their females so, because I am a woman, I am able to approach any female, in any town, because they see me as a woman and I am not a threat,” Baah said.

Gender parity in peacekeeping, especially among its leaders and uniformed personnel, has long been a priority for the U.N. The organization, which depends on its member countries to provide military and police contingents, has launched several initiatives over the years, including urging and incentivizing troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy more women.

Over the years, the missions have made progress. Between 1957 and 1989, there were only 20 uniformed women in peacekeeping. As of September 2023, there



A Ghanaian peacekeeper patrols an internally displaced persons camp in Bentiu, South Sudan. These patrols provide opportunities to engage with community members and gather early warnings about potential conflicts. GREGÓRIO CUNHA/UNMISS

were 6,200. Still, that is less than 10% of the more than 70,000 uniformed peacekeepers deployed.

More than half of these women are from Africa. Among the 120 countries that contribute troops and police, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia are some of Africa’s largest contributors of uniformed women today.

“Together, with all the other women pioneers, we have a responsibility to carry the torch and break down the gender stereotypes, prejudices and barriers against women in the field of corrections and security,” said Téné Maimouna Zoungrana, a corrections officer from Burkina Faso who served in the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic.

Zoungrana was awarded the first U.N. Trailblazer Award for Women Justice and Corrections Officers in 2022 for her work creating an all-female rapid-intervention team and recruiting and training local prison officers.

Renewable Energy a Priority in Future Missions

UNITED NATIONS

The transition to renewable energy in United Nations peacekeeping missions helps ensure the safety and security of uniformed personnel serving in the field, U.N. officials say.

Speaking at the 2023 U.N. Peacekeeping Ministerial conference in Accra, Ghana, Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare said the shift to green energy in the field “is not just about environmental footprint,” as it helps to protect peacekeepers by reducing the

need to transport fuel on dangerous roads. With proper energy management, operational resilience to withstand fuel shortages also is increased, meaning that missions can run core infrastructure even when fuel supplies cannot be delivered.

Delegates from more than 85 countries attended the conference, where discussions focused on environmental management at peacekeeping operations.

Khare said that progress has

included “a major jump” in the proportion of waste treated through recycling, composting and incineration, which has risen from 19% to 65%. Additionally, fuel use per capita, per day in electricity generation has decreased from 4.1 liters to 3.7 liters.

“This may sound modest as a per capita figure, but in real terms this represents a reduction of 15 million liters of diesel per year, or around 40,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions,” he said.



SOUTH AFRICA Shares Policing Expertise With Angola

SANEWS

The national police commissioner of South Africa hosted the commissioner of the Angola National Police on a seven-day working visit in January 2024. Angola’s police force wanted to share insight and knowledge on how the South African Police Service prevents and tackles transnational organized crime and emerging threats.

South African Gen. Fannie Masemola hosted the delegation led by Angola National Police Commissioner Gen. Arnaldo Manuel Carlos.

The visit is a continuation of a longstanding partnership that was fostered in 2017. The two police agencies signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance working relations to prevent and combat cross-border crimes such as drug smuggling, human trafficking and mineral theft.

The Angolan delegation included senior officers and those responsible for Angola’s Criminal Investigation Service, narcotics investigations unit, environmental and

natural resources investigations unit, and Angolan Interpol.

The Angolan police shared insights with South African police detectives, crime intelligence officers, experts from the Forensic Science Laboratory, Police Emergency Services and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, commonly known as the Hawks.

The Angolan delegation also studied South Africa’s Operation Shanela, which consists of regular stop searches, roadblocks, vehicle checkpoints and high-visibility patrols. The operation includes the tracing of wanted suspects with a focus on murder and rape and compliance inspections at liquor outlets and secondhand goods dealers.

South African police want to “share knowledge and expertise with our counterparts with the aim of also ensuring that we benefit through joint cross-border operations between the two countries,” Masemola said.

South African police officers stand guard in Johannesburg.

CAR, UGANDA ENTER MILITARY AGREEMENT

DEFENCEWEB

Uganda has entered a military cooperation agreement with a country that it shares no border with — the Central African Republic.

Ugandan Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs

Vincent Ssempijja was reported by the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces as saying a memorandum of understanding has reiterated his country's commitment to a Central African Republic military partnership.

"Uganda has always been committed to promoting peace and stability in the region, and we strongly believe the best way to achieve this is through cooperation and collaboration with our neighbors," he said after the signing in Kampala.

"Our defense partnership with CAR is a testament to this commitment, and we will continue to work together to ensure our region remains peaceful and prosperous."

Ssempijja commended the "unconditional support" from the CAR government during 2023's repatriation of former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) combatants from the Zemio and Mboki camps. Uganda's Joint Chief of

Staff, Maj. Gen. Leopold Kyanda, referred to cooperation with the landlocked country as part of an African Union regional task force that was "crucial in degrading the LRA whose remnants have since renounced the rebellion."

CAR National Defence and Army Reconstruction Minister Claude Bireau thanked Uganda for its contribution during the "peak of LRA activities in CAR."

Bireau said the fact that Uganda emerged from civil war to develop a professional armed forces offers a model to the CAR.

"We want to benchmark the professionalism and the good attributes of the Ugandan Army. Because it came from the same crisis, we think it is now a role model," Bireau said.

Ssempijja said Uganda's history makes it eager to help nations in crisis. "We know what it is when your brother is in need; we have been in that kind of situation for a long time, and we know what little we have can be shared," he said. "That's why you see we have 1.5 million refugees ... we are not rich, but we cannot just laugh when our brothers and sisters are suffering."



Ugandan Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs Vincent Ssempijja, left, and Central African Republic Defense Minister Claude Bireau pose after the signing of the memorandum of understanding. UPDF

U.N. WILL BACK African Union Peace Missions

ADF STAFF

As part of what is being called a new generation of peacekeeping missions, the United Nations Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution to help fund African Union-led peace support operations.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has endorsed the decision. On social media, he called the vote a "ground-breaking resolution" that will help address a "critical gap in the international peace and security architecture."

The U.N. issued a December 22, 2023, statement saying that, "Since the start of his mandate, the Secretary-General has repeatedly called for a new generation of Peace Support Operations led by African partners, with guaranteed funding including through UN assessed contributions, to respond to the peace and security challenges on the continent."

Recent U.N. peacekeeping missions in Africa have faltered due to a lack of support from host nations, among other problems. The 10-year-old mission in Mali completed



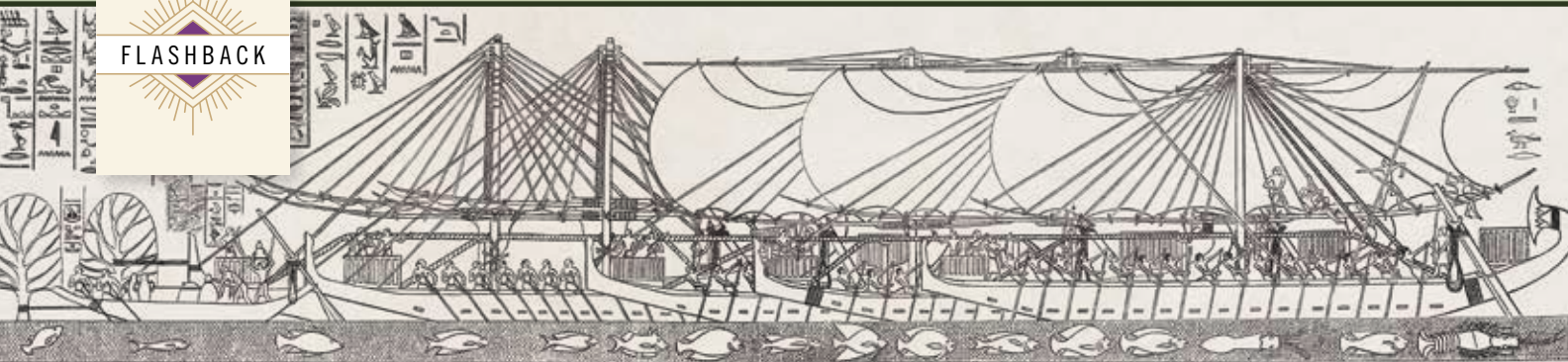
The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia holds a medal parade ceremony at the Sector One Headquarters in Mogadishu.

PHILLIP NAMAYO/ATMIS

its withdrawal at the end of 2023. The U.N. mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has begun its withdrawal.

The United States Mission to the U.N. thanked Ghana for its leadership and partnership throughout the resolution process. "As we near the end of Ghana's time on the Security Council, we are eager to cement its legacy by working with the AU on the deployment of a mission to promote peace and protect civilians on a continent facing grave and complex security threats," the mission said in a release.

For 2024, Algeria, Mozambique and Sierra Leone are representing Africa on the Security Council. Sierra Leone returned to the Security Council in 2023 as a nonpermanent delegate after a 53-year absence. Algeria joined in 2024.



Finding the Lost Kingdom of Punt

ADF STAFF

More than 4,000 years ago, the pharaohs of Egypt established a trading partnership with the prosperous Land of Punt. The Egyptians kept the location of the kingdom a secret. They would travel vast distances on land and sea to trade with the country, which they regarded as Ta Netjer — God’s Land.

The earliest known direct references to Punt come from the Palermo Stone, a tablet that contains accounts of the ancient Egyptian dynasties. The stone’s inscriptions say that during the reign of King Sahure, about 2450 B.C., traders led a profitable expedition to Punt, returning with myrrh, gold, silver, timber and slaves. It is the first record of Egyptians traveling there.

The Land of Punt mostly was hidden from the rest of the world because of its isolation. The citizens of Punt were eager to trade for the Egyptians’ tools, jewelry and weapons. In exchange, the Egyptians received ivory, ebony, gold, elephant tusks, incense and wild animals, including baboons.

But each journey to the Kingdom of Punt was long and difficult. Over the centuries, the trading partnership faded, then stopped altogether. The Egyptians lost track of Punt’s location. It faded from memory, believed to be somewhere along the Red Sea, or farther south. But no one knew for sure.

When Queen Hatshepsut became the pharaoh of Egypt about 1470 B.C.,

the route to Punt had been lost for decades. Hatshepsut told her subjects that the gods had directed her to find the route by sending a trade mission. The expedition began in about her ninth year as pharaoh, when she dispatched five ships, each 21 meters long. The 210 men sent on the trip included sailors and rowers.

The journey was a fantastic enterprise. The Egyptians traveled down the Nile, took apart their ships and carried them across land to the Red Sea, where they reassembled them. The portable ships were light, but they also were fragile, and had to keep to the safer shallow shores of the Red Sea. The trip at sea took about 25 days, covering 50 kilometers per day.

The successful trip thrilled the citizens of Punt, who knew how dangerous the Egyptians’ journey had been. The Egyptians returned from the trip with the expected vast wealth, but they also had 31 myrrh trees, each with its roots in a basket. Hatshepsut had the trees planted in the courts of her mortuary temple complex, where they thrived — the first time in recorded history that anyone had successfully transplanted foreign trees. The roots of the trees still can be seen to this day.

Trade with the Kingdom of Punt continued into Egypt’s New Kingdom era. But over time, regional politics and empire-building took priority over dangerous long-distance trade. By about 1100 B.C., Punt had

Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut deployed merchant ships to the Land of Punt about 1470 B.C. The ships sailed south on the Nile, then were disassembled for a trek across land before being rebuilt to sail on the Red Sea. This reproduction of a wood engraving was copied from an ancient mural.

once again become a lost land of mystery. Egyptologist Joyce Tyldesley has described Punt in the post-New Kingdom time as “an unreal and fabulous land of myths and legends.”

Over the years, historians and scientists developed theories as to the location of the lost kingdom. They came to believe that Punt was on the Horn of Africa, possibly in what is now Ethiopia. Other possibilities included Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, southern Sudan and even Yemen. Some researchers have theorized that Punt might have been another name for a port city the Romans called Adulis in what is now Eritrea.

In 2020, a team of researchers achieved a breakthrough when they examined radioactive isotopes in the mummified remains of baboons in Egypt dating to the New Kingdom and the Ptolemaic period, 305 to 330 B.C. The scientists discovered that some of the animals were not native to Egypt but likely were from the Horn of Africa. Because they knew the Egyptians got baboons from Punt, they were able to narrow the location.

One particular baboon, a female, had salvageable DNA, which was traced to the Adulis region. Although the study does not close the book on the location of Punt, it almost certainly puts it in what is now Eritrea. The discovery might help historians unlock secrets from this long-lost civilization.

CLUES

- 1** The Roman Emperor Trajan established this ancient city as a military colony in A.D. 100.
- 2** It is laid out with precision, illustrating the skill of Roman urban planning.
- 3** Buildings and homes were built entirely of stone, and streets were paved with large, rectangular limestone slabs.
- 4** Early Arab conquests in the seventh century destroyed the city, which was not inhabited after the eighth century.





SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

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