

The African Union in International Peacebuilding: Towards an African (*Ubuntu*) Agenda for Peace in the Korean Peninsula

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ABSTRACT

Since its inception in 2002, the African Union (AU) endeavours to strengthen its role in enhancing peace and security in Africa. Through its renewed commitments to Agenda 2063, the institution ties these aspirations of building African solutions to African problems to seeking greater experience and legitimacy for the AU at a global level. This article explores the

challenges and opportunities for the participation of the AU in international peacebuilding efforts, analytically anchoring its argument on the concept of *Ubuntu* in peace-making as a prism for the engagement of the AU in long-standing conflicts such as the Korean Peninsula conflict. The findings of this study revealed that the AU has limited resources, capacity and expertise as an institution but argues that despite these challenges, the AU can

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re-align its aspirations to enhance opportunities for greater engagement in international peacebuilding. Beyond the scholarly contribution to peacebuilding, the article could inform an African-led agenda for peacebuilding processes over the Korean Peninsula as the AU enhances its role in international peace and security.

Keywords: African Union; Korean Peninsula; Peacebuilding; *Ubuntu*; Challenges; Opportunities.

La Unión Africana en la construcción de la Paz Internacional: hacia una Agenda Africana (*Ubuntu*) para la paz en la península de Corea

RESUMEN

Desde su creación en 2002, la Unión Africana (UA) se ha esforzado por fortalecer su papel en la promoción de la paz y la seguridad en África. A través de su renovado compromiso con la Agenda 2063, la institución vincula estas aspiraciones de construir soluciones africanas a los problemas africanos con la búsqueda de una mayor experiencia y legitimidad para la UA a nivel global. Este artículo explora los desafíos y las oportunidades para la participación de la UA en los esfuerzos internacionales de consolidación de la paz, anclando analíticamente su argumento en el concepto de *Ubuntu* en la construcción

de paz como un prisma para el compromiso de la UA en conflictos de larga duración, como el de la península coreana. Los hallazgos de este estudio revelan que la UA tiene recursos, capacidad y experiencia limitados como institución, pero sostienen que, a pesar de estos desafíos, puede reorientar sus aspiraciones para ampliar las oportunidades de una mayor participación en la construcción de la paz internacional. Más allá de su contribución académica a la consolidación de la paz, el artículo podría servir de base para una agenda africana de procesos de paz en la península coreana, en la medida en que la UA refuerza su papel en la paz y la seguridad internacionales.

Palabras clave: Unión Africana; península coreana; construcción de paz; *Ubuntu*; desafíos; oportunidades.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, the following twofold research question is explored: what are the challenges and opportunities for the African Union's participation in international peacebuilding efforts, and how can *Ubuntu* be used as a resource in peace-making for the AU's engagement in long-standing conflicts such as the Korean Peninsula conflict? The research question is driven by the observable problem characterised by the ongoing state of the Korean conflict, which requires the intervention of other international institutions, such as the African Union (AU), to contribute towards peacebuilding in international

geopolitics. The AU as an institution has been a subject of extensive scholarly research in the last two decades, whereas emerging and shifting dynamics of conflict within the region and globally continue to test the efficacy of its functions in international peacebuilding efforts (Murithi, 2017; Pinto, 2022; Kwaleyela, 2023). The establishment of the AU set the pace for a new and reformed African approach to enhancing continental peace and security, leading to a new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (Murithi, 2017). The Constitutive Act of the AU affirms the significance of member states' commitment to promoting democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, and good governance. It is generally understood that Africa must re-write its history and complement the efforts of other international actors in consolidating world peace and security (AU, 2002; Kwaleyela, 2023). By the 2010s, the AU had amassed extensive experience in peace support missions in Africa leading to a multidimensional approach to peacebuilding at continental level (Murithi, 2017; Pinto, 2022). Despite these instrumental gains, it is clear that the AU's role in continental peacebuilding did not translate into legitimacy of the institution in similar

peace support efforts at international level.

At the same time, while reaffirming its commitments to Agenda 2063, the AU continues to face many obstacles in developing context-specific strategies for continental peace and development¹. Relatedly, long-standing dissonance over political ideologies at the international level remains a key factor in driving intractable conflicts in international relations, thus revealing the continued absence of international institutions such as the AU in mitigating these tensions. This article finds the Korean Peninsula as one of the most studied and documented conflicts, which continues to exert significant geopolitical influence in global relations (Jung, 2024). The conflict over the Korean Peninsula remains a major cause of unease amongst nation-states that influence this region and its resultant significance in the United Nations (UN).

Simultaneously, the conflict points to the limits of dominant liberal approaches to peacebuilding that underscore contemporary motivations guiding international actors in these efforts. Consequently, the objective of this article is to analyse the position and relevance of the AU in international peacebuilding affirming that the

1 The African Union Commission, working closely with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and supported by the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), put in place a continental agenda for the next 50 years. The AU rededicated itself to the continent's development and pledged their commitment to make progress by adopting Agenda 2063 in 2013.

institution's renewed agenda for Africa is tied to its legitimacy at a global level. In doing so, the article utilises the Korean conflict as a prism of assessment to particularly address the limits and institutional challenges impeding the AU's participation in international peacebuilding. Emerging from this, the article outlines an African agenda for peace using an analytical lens framed within the African doctrine of *Ubuntu* as an opportunity for the engagement of the AU in international peacebuilding. It concludes with an analysis of the findings from the literature review arguing that seeking legitimacy for the AU in international peacebuilding is pertinent to affirming Africa's renewed and shifting position in global power structures.

THE POLITICS OF THE KOREAN CONFLICT

At the end of the Second World War (WWII), ideological divisions led to new forms of conflict amongst the world's superpowers, leading to a long period of the Cold War that lasted from 1947 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (National Archives, 2021). Tensions between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union led to the transformation of international conflict. After the devastating armed conflict seen during WWII, the Cold War emerged. This period saw increasingly polarised

factions that persist within the UN today. Emerging from this, the conflict led to a north-south divide, building two separate Korean nation-states, as a culmination of the tensions between the West and the East allies of the US and the Soviet Union².

In 1948, the US and the Soviet Union divided the Korean territory for administrative purposes, following the defeat and expulsion of Japanese forces from the territory at the end of WWII (National Archives, 2016). By the early 1950s, conflict in the Korean Peninsula became the first major proxy war leading to persistent tensions between the capitalist-driven US and its allies, on one hand, and the communist Soviet Union and its allies on the other. Given the divisive nature of the proxy war, the current state of relations between the two Koreas remains fragile, driven in part by US and Russian tensions. This is despite the UN's attempts to officially end the protracted conflict.

Existing literature has extensively documented the state of the Korean Peninsula conflict. You and Hahn (2018) note that the two Koreas have maintained a costly rivalry for several decades through military contestation. The experiences of the two nation-states remain problematically influenced by the geopolitical tensions amongst global superpowers particularly Japan, China, Russia and the US. Although both

2 During its existence, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or simply, the Soviet Union was comprised of Russia and 14 surrounding countries in the Baltic states of Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean, including the majority of northern Asia and portions of Central Asia.

nations continue to suggest that peace is the desired outcome, Lee (2018) argues that the calls for peace are idealistic and inadequately pursued by the concerned parties. While divisions between the two countries have led to the recognition of the importance of peace in the region, these discussions are fundamentally limited and politically influenced by external actors. Peace talks between the two countries focus on the unification and reduction of military tensions, despite underplaying the broader tenets of peace to strive towards the need to respect cultural diversity and divergent socio-political ideologies (Jung, 2024).

A discourse encouraging a consciousness of separation was being fostered between North Korea and South Korea to influence the national identities and relationships of the two countries. For example, Kim Jong Un declared the “Two Hostile States” doctrine during the 9th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) in December 2023, and the narrative was reiterated in his New Year’s policy speech at the Supreme People’s Assembly in January 2024 in North Korea” (Ildo, 2024, p. 1). Thus, “the relationship between the two states is no longer one of kinship and homogeneity, but rather that of two hostile nations, two belligerents at war” (Jung, 2024, p. 450).

Despite the two countries signing the South-North Basic Agreement in 1991, North Korea’s “Our State First” doctrine became a strong ethnic sentiment that dominantly influences its policy towards South Korea (Ildo, 2024). These sentiments maintain an antagonistic and conflictual agenda that negatively influences strategies for sustainable peace in the Korean Peninsula and effectively abrogate the South-North Agreement³. Ildo (2024) further points out that the adoption of the “Two Hostile States” doctrine could have been attributed to North Korea’s confidence in the advancement of nuclear weapons. It may also result from diplomatic relations with Russia or the growing economic competition between North Korea and South Korea. North Korea has also decided to cut links with the Republic of South Korea by reorganising its foreign policy towards the US and its allies in the Korean conflict as well as by introducing new official terms that label South Korea as ‘puppets of the West’ on all state media. Furthermore, in October 2024, North Korea agreed to cut of inter-Korean rail and road connections and criticised South Korea’s military expansion (Dwijayani & Maksum, 2023).

North Korea states that the “Two Hostile States” doctrine was designed to assert its international foreign policy (Jung, 2024). On the other hand, Ildo

3 The South-North Basic Agreement is an agreement that both Korean States signed in 1991 to promote peace, cooperation, non-aggression, and peaceful exchanges.

(2024) argues that the policy was introduced so that North Korea could gain a legal ground for expanding its military power while controlling its surroundings in line with its national interests. North Korea also aims at countering the alliance between the US and South Korea and at pushing for some provocation on the territories in the Yellow Sea by drawing the attention of the United States (Ildo, 2024). While You and Hahn (2018) argue that the rivalry between North and South Korea are due to the extreme belligerent attitude and insecurity of the North, the interests of the US, China and Russia have been considered as a persistent contributing factor to the Korean Peninsula Conflict.

North Korea continues to shift its economic policies arguing that economic cooperation between the two Korean states is no longer seen as viable or advantageous for the country (Ildo, 2024). As the country remains a pariah state on the international front, North Korea is increasingly isolated as it has opted for self-reliance as the only viable means for the country's economic growth (Kim, 2023). Relatedly, scholars argue that there is need for international actors to understand the nature of North Korea's policy shift and to consider both Kim Jong Un's words and actions (Ki-Bum, 2025). Kim (2024) asserts that a policy of cracking down on the influx of South Korean media and culture into North Korea is part of the state's attempts to delineate from South Korea. Ildo (2024, p. 4) further argues that the policy "serves

as a justification for intensifying judicial control over cultural inflows, as the regime remains wary of the potential destabilisation such influences could pose to its stability". In this regard, a cultural war was declared against South Korean culture (Dwijayani & Maksum, 2023). Thus, there were deliberate policies designed to prevent the cultural influence of South Korea in North Korea in that distributing foreign media in the country was considered a grave crime (Kim, 2024).

With such profound ideological divisions between the two nation-states, international efforts to resolve hostilities in the Korean Peninsula remain fragmented due to the shifting dynamics of this conflict. For the UN, for instance, the difficulties of achieving sustainable peace whilst maintaining neutrality in complex conflicts has been a key operational conundrum faced by the organisation. The UN was forced to waive its neutrality during the armed hostilities in the Korean Peninsula in the early 1950s, given the advancement of North Korea towards South Korean territory (National Archives, 2021). The influence of domino theory politics that drove the US interaction with the Soviet Union in the proxy war institutionalised the idea that for some form of peace to be built in the Korean Peninsula, North Korea should be policed and micro-managed to suit the international relations that built world peace after WWII (Kwaleyela, 2023). Following the armistice signed between the US and North Korea in July 1953, the

agreement restored the sovereignty of South Korea, leading to the temporal cessation of open hostilities in the Korean Peninsula (National Archives, 2021). However, hostilities between the two states continue to suggest that efforts to broker peace must be continually sustained and revisited.

In the same vein, this article finds that the foregoing state of the Korean conflict provides a litmus test for other international institutions, such as the AU, to play a role in long-standing conflicts that largely influence international geopolitics. The AU with its long history of peacekeeping missions in regional and civil wars has renewed its focus through Agenda 2063 towards multidimensional peacebuilding endeavours. With this aspiration, the mandate to create a peaceful and unified Africa is inherently tied to the AU's need for recognition, legitimacy and experience at a global level. For this reason, the article adopts a theoretical lens derived from the African concept of *Ubuntu* to argue that new forms of interaction in peace negotiations between the two Korean states can benefit from the historical role of the AU as a neutral ally in international relations. Conceptually, peacebuilding in its traditional form is understood to include mechanisms to rebuild war-affected communities and the normalisation of relationships between people who were once in conflict with each other (Keating & Knight, 2004).

Institutions such as the AU and UN have expanded the focus of

peacebuilding in the last two decades, tying their aspirations to a multidimensional approach to build peace that can be maintained over a long period of time with the underlying causes of the original conflict having been addressed. In this paper, peacebuilding is conceptualised as mediated peace that is built through a neutral party or peace agreement with help from various international and local players (International Peace Institute, 2009; Cockell, 2000). Despite this, long-standing conflicts in geopolitically sensitive global regions point to the limits of these approaches whilst revealing the need to expand such initiatives to include measures designed from a multidisciplinary range of expertise. In this regard, regional institutions such as the AU seek to build capacity for African states to contribute to global peace support operations under the UN. The AU, through the Peace and Security Council (PSC), is continually enhancing its operations by establishing stronger ties with the UN and the EU. This approach ensures that it develops a more prominent and effective role in international peace and security.

UBUNTU AS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

The *Ubuntu* philosophy is a key principle within African approaches to peacebuilding, which the AU adopts in many of its policy documents (AU, 2018a). Kurtz (2022) notes that *Ubuntu* as a concept emphasises the need

for peace processes to preserve and encourage stable relationships between conflicting parties. Consequently, this article adopted the philosophy of *Ubuntu* as a lens to assess how the AU can potentially play a role in peacebuilding at an international level, as the institution aims to legitimise its peacebuilding agenda. *Ubuntu* can be described as the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual care (Tutu, 1999). It was spearheaded by anti-apartheid leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Thabo Mbeki, amongst others (Bolden, 2014). Murithi (2006) argues that a fundamental aspect of African ideals in peacebuilding is historically linked to traditional societies where dialogue, reconciliation and strengthening the rule of law have been key to building peace in Africa. It was used as a framework for peace and reconciliation for the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to find a solution for the injustices committed during apartheid (Tutu, 1999). It is similar to other philosophies such as *Jen* by the Chinese, *Loob* (Filipinos) and *Obchina* for the Russians (Bolden, 2014). Contrary to the dominant liberal views of peace, *Ubuntu* is centred on holistic and encompassing ideals of human relations rather than on the prevailing modern Western paradigms that promote elitism (Akinola & Uzodike, 2017).

UBUNTU CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ubuntu is linked to the indigenous forms of conflict resolution in African societies that existed before the continent's colonial era. Prior to the assimilation of European culture in African societies, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms existed amongst traditional societies and continue to inform much of contemporary Africa's approaches to peacebuilding (Zartman, 2000). Murithi (2006) asserts that *Ubuntu* places a high value on communal life and maintaining positive relations within societies as a task in which attempts at peace-making are collectively designed. Consensus building is central to the philosophy's approach to building peace. This approach calls upon the respect for the regulation and management of relationships between parties to a conflict. Below is a conceptual framework for *Ubuntu* for peacebuilding process.

Ubuntu followed a five-stage process for conflict resolution, the first stage was fact finding by the council of elders (Murithi, 2006). Arthur *et al.* (2015) pointed out that the storytelling method was effective during the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa on the crimes that were committed against Africans during Apartheid. The second step was that the perpetrator was asked to seek mercy from the victim (Murithi, 2006). Joint problem solving between the perpetrators and the victims involved granting reparations to the victims and amnesty to

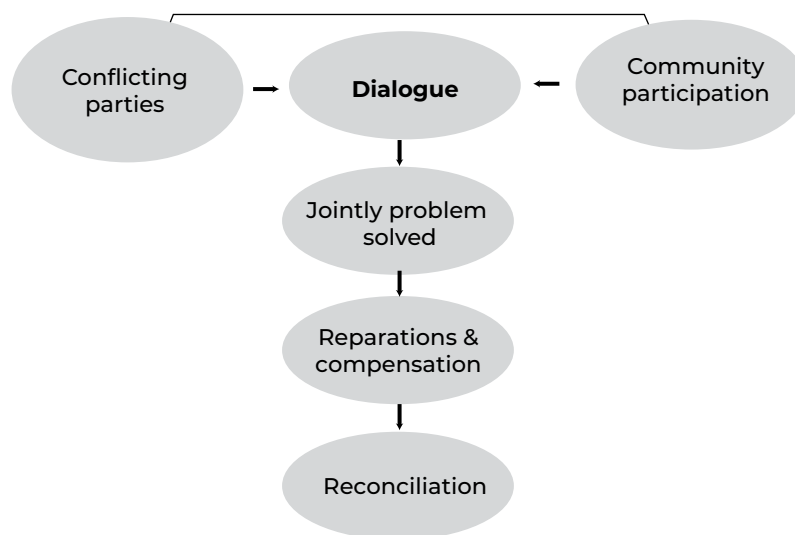


FIGURE 1. PROCESS OF PEACEBUILDING.

the offenders (Arthur *et al.*, 2015). The third step involved the victim granting forgiveness, the fourth step dealt with compensations and reparations, and the fifth step encouraged reconciliation (Murithi, 2006). The peacebuilding process needed the participation of both parties, for example, during the South African TRC process, opportunities were given to all parties involved (Arthur *et al.*, 2015).

Many scholars affirm that *Ubuntu* is one of the core values in peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa and, as a philosophy, it emphasises the importance of humanity and community life (Arthur *et al.*, 2015; Murithi, 2006; Swanson, 2008). Simply, the term *Ubuntu* is derived from an African expression, '*Umntu ngu muntu ngabantu*', which in English means 'A person is a person through other persons', or 'I am

because we are; we are because I am' (Ramose, 1999; Goduka, 2000). The philosophy emphasises the importance of cooperation between communities and nation-states as a strategy for cordial national and foreign relations, rather than competition that could lead to grave instability within any community (Masina, 2000). Murithi (2006) also asserted that, indigenous conflict resolution focuses on the principles of love, empathy, sharing, caring, forgiveness and cooperation as forms of negotiation and mediation in peace-making.

Despite the cultural diversity of the African continent, African societies possess a diverse set of indigenous peacebuilding processes that have been practiced for centuries (Arthur *et al.*, 2015). These peacebuilding processes are designed to promote healing and reconciliation between

conflicting parties. They use both spiritual and physical methods that are central to relationships within societies (Okrah, 2003). In olden times, this implied that a person or a community needed to be reconciled with their ancestors, spirits, and gods as well as with their fellow man. The process of reconciliation required symbols of atonement. For example, the exchange of gifts between the conflicting parties such as fowls, goats, and cows for celebrating (McGinty, 2008). The celebrations aimed to promote peace, unity, and community mobilisation (Arthur *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the peacebuilding process concerned the active involvement of all conflicting parties to allow equal participation from all sides in the recommended process (Brock-Utne, 2001). It was based on simple, flexible, participatory approaches, and relevant and local methods (Brock Utne, 2001). Similarly, Ndumbe (2001) noted that African peacebuilding processes focused on reintegrating the

aggrieved parties into society to promote community development.

The concept of *Ubuntu* draws from this historical ideation of building peace in African societies and follows a prescribed process of conflict resolution institutionalised within the AU peacebuilding agenda. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is modelled along the dictates of *Ubuntu* to include a framework designed to address conflict prevention, management, and resolution in the continent⁴. Murithi (2006) argues that building peace in African societies has not always been straightforward, and the stages required to implement peace-making processes are prone to resistance from conflicting parties. Whilst the concept of *Ubuntu* essentialises joint problem-solving as central to establishing peaceful engagement between those deemed as perpetrators and victims in a conflict, this was done by giving reparations to victims and amnesty to the offenders as was the case with the TRC in South Africa and similar to transitional justice in the

4 The main pillar of the APSA is the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which is supported, in the discharge of its mandate, by various structures, namely: the Commission, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Peace Fund. The relationship between the African Union (AU), which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) is a key APSA component (African Union Peace and Security Department, 2012).

5 In opting for mass justice, Rwanda chose local, community-based justice over other post-conflict reconciliation mechanisms such as amnesties or truth commissions. In consultation with its foreign donors, the government made the *gacaca* courts its primary legal mechanism to generate a truthful record of who did what, to whom, during the 1994 genocide (Thomson, 2015).

Gacaca courts of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide⁵. Arthur *et al.* (2015) affirm that building mutual understanding between conflicting parties was central to designing appropriate mechanisms for engagement during conflict resolution. The guiding principle of *Ubuntu* is thus based on the notion that parties need to be reconciled to rebuild and maintain social trust and social cohesion, with a view to preventing a culture of vendetta or retribution from developing and escalating between parties (Murithi, 2006; Arthur *et al.*, 2015).

One of the limitations of *Ubuntu* philosophy as a peacebuilding framework is that it is culturally specific (Omodan, 2022). This is because every culture has its own social norms and conventions that may not be applicable to other cultures. Liu *et al.* (2022) have noted that cultural norms are unwritten codes of conduct for all human cultures that vary from one culture to another. Bolden (2014) noted that interdependence and collectivism might be difficult to extend to other cultures because *Ubuntu*, for Bolden (2014), was used during the precolonial period by ethnic groups for loyalty and survival purposes by supporting and working together for the group to thrive. *Ubuntu* might not work due to other factors in the post-colonial period such as urbanisation and modernity. Thus, it was successful because it was based on group identity and family relations. Bolden (2014) noted that extending it to other cultural groups might not be

practical due to differences of ideologies and beliefs.

Arising from this, this article argues that the popular discourse of separation and ambitions of power, economic sanctions, development of nuclear weapons, and curtailing of the influx of culture from South Korea by North Korea remains problematic for peacebuilding efforts. Based on the principles of *Ubuntu*, the article affirms that building legitimacy for the AU in international peacebuilding is dependent on creating and designing mechanisms for which the institution can be usefully engaged in negotiating peace in such conflicts. The AU could use the principles of dialogue, consensus building, equal participation, high value on life and communal life, and maintaining a positive spirit in framing an agenda for peace. Thus conceptually, *Ubuntu* is utilised in this article to make meaning of the opportunities at the disposal of the AU in participating in peace-making that can facilitate peacebuilding in the Korean Peninsula.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological positioning of this article is a critical multi-faceted literature review of the AU from various scholarly perspectives. This includes a look at scholarly literature on the functions of the AU and its peace and security architecture, assessing documents about institutions of the AU, and evaluating the performance of the AU in line with other international

institutions, such as the EU and the UN. Reviewing reports from a diverse set of sources enabled well-rounded cross-referencing to ascertain how the existing frameworks adopted under the AU need to be re-aligned to suit the changing and complex dynamics that influence existing conflicts in Africa and other international conflicts that affect the African continent. The example of the Korean Peninsula conflict offers a comparative basis for the comprehensive study of the challenges that continue to impede the AU's prescribed functions in continental and international peacebuilding.

Thus, the article is informed by insights from a study which employed a qualitative approach and a historical study design. Qualitative research is understood as a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. The study used a historical study design to analyse the contribution that the African Union can make towards the Korean conflict. The purpose of a historical study is to draw conclusions about the present and the future, based on research conducted in the past (University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2021). As guided by Lundy (2008), a historical research design is a process of inquiry that involves identifying research questions, gathering and evaluating evidence, and constructing plausible explanations for past events. The study drew from documents in the form of journals, books, and newspapers. The sources of data thus included both primary

(such as newspapers, archival materials and policy papers) and secondary (such as journal articles and books). This is because a historical research design utilises historical sources, such as documents and oral histories, to investigate past events and develop an understanding of human behaviour over time. Accordingly, the article utilised diverse databases including JSTOR, Scopus, google scholar and the AU website to identify data relating to the focus of the study. The key words and phrases which were used in the search revolved around the challenges and opportunities in the functions of the AU and its peace and security architecture, *Ubuntu* and peacebuilding, and the potentials for *Ubuntu* as a tool for AU's peacebuilding initiatives. The initial search was complimented by a follow up of the relevant sources which emerged.

In line with the historical research design, the data were thematically analysed using the general framework suggested by Barker *et al.* (2002). This involved a search for common themes that transcended the data alongside an interpretation of the themes. This included the generation and application of codes to the data, and the identification, analysis, and report of patterns (themes) while paying attention to chronology, and the historical context, and the principles of the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Importantly, the guidelines on quality control formulated for handling documentary sources by Scott (1990) such as authenticity, credibility,

representativeness, and meaning were adhered to, and the findings are presented according to the key themes which emerged in the study.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the literature review conducted in this study indicate that, as an institution, the AU has historically been riddled with challenges that impede its effective participation in peacebuilding efforts at both continental and global levels. Despite this drawback, it is also clear that the AU's absence from global peacebuilding efforts continues to negatively influence the outcome of peacebuilding efforts in Africa. These findings thematically relate to how the AU as an institution has successfully contributed to peace missions across Africa, showing its potential capacity in peace support operations. Second, this assesses the challenges that affect the AU and how these challenges conversely present opportunities for the engagement of the AU in peacebuilding over the Korean Peninsula. As a strategy for greater African presence in global power structures, the article finds that the historical position of African states as neutral allies, of both North and South Korea, presents an opportunity for the engagement of the AU in peacebuilding efforts in that region.

SUCSESSES OF THE AU IN AFRICA

With the inception of the AU in 2001, member states recognised that to

increase prospects for socio-economic development in the continent, enhancing collective peace and security were fundamental to the duties of the institution (Murithi, 2006). Through the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the AU initiated peace support operations through peacekeeping missions to support member states experiencing ongoing instability from conflicts. The institution gained considerable agency with peace-making missions in Burundi, Comoros, Sudan, and Somalia, leading to the cessation of violent conflict and paving the way for peaceful settlement of disputes in those cases. Mathews (2018) notes that the AU has been instrumental to intervention in violent conflict in at least 28 different conflicts in Africa. Other scholars describe how through institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention and management, AU operations have been fundamental to continental peace support missions (Hampton, 2014; Allen, 2023). Relatedly, the establishment of APSA has been instrumental to the functions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the African Standby Force (ASF) as AU institutions leading peace-making and peace support operations in fragile member states.

Kohnert (2023) notes that the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was the first AU-mandated armed peace operation when its deployment was authorised in 2003, before the inauguration of the AU's Peace and Security Council. The AU deployed a

peacekeeping mission to Burundi during the country's civil war in the early 2000s, following an important peace agreement signed in Arusha, Tanzania⁶. Allen (2023) shows how the AU partnered with the UN in mediating and negotiating a peace agreement during the crisis in Darfur in 2004 leading to a brokered peace that enforced and monitored ceasefires. Similarly, through the African Standby Force (ASF) in a subsequent African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the AU set out a complex agenda to actively engage in peace talks to enhance stability and security in Somalia, including supporting the establishment of transitional governments. AMISOM operations in Somalia, since 2007, have been key to supporting the Somali government in efforts to reduce the regional influence and threat of extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab militants (Mathews, 2018). In addressing the continent's security challenges, the vision of 'African solutions to African problems' was instrumental and gained considerable mileage in AU-led peace operations as evidenced by the number of such operations since 2000. Allen (2023) argues that despite the precarious position of its member states in critical global

issues, the AU's peace agenda in Africa is an indication of collective will to address the problematic and historical drivers of violent conflict. Appendix is an extract from Allen (2023) and details the AU-led operations in Africa since 2000.

Despite the resurgence of military coups in Africa over the past decade, the AU has shown growing willingness to intervene in member states in recognition of grave circumstances of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Through diplomatic ties to the UN, the AU increased its peace support operations to implement a diverse set of multidimensional UN peacekeeping operations - such as MINUSCA - which was mandated to protect civilians and support transition processes in the Central African Republic⁷. Scholars affirm that despite the complex institutional challenges affecting the AU's performance in Africa, the institution through its partnership with the UN has gained experience in global peace support operations (Hampton, 2014; Kohnert, 2023). By 2015, African states increased their contributions of personnel to UN peacekeeping deployments, leading to enhanced prospects for regional security and strengthened

6 The Arusha Peace Agreement of 2000 aimed to end Burundi's civil war by institutionalising power-sharing between ethnic groups and establishing democratic institutions. Among its key provisions was power sharing in government and the military, protection of minority rights, electoral reforms, and measures for justice, reconciliation, and the resettlement of refugees.

7 The UN Security Council authorised the deployment of a multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operation, MINUSCA, in 2014 aimed at the protection of civilians through support for humanitarian assistance, promotion, and protection of human rights in the Central African Republic.

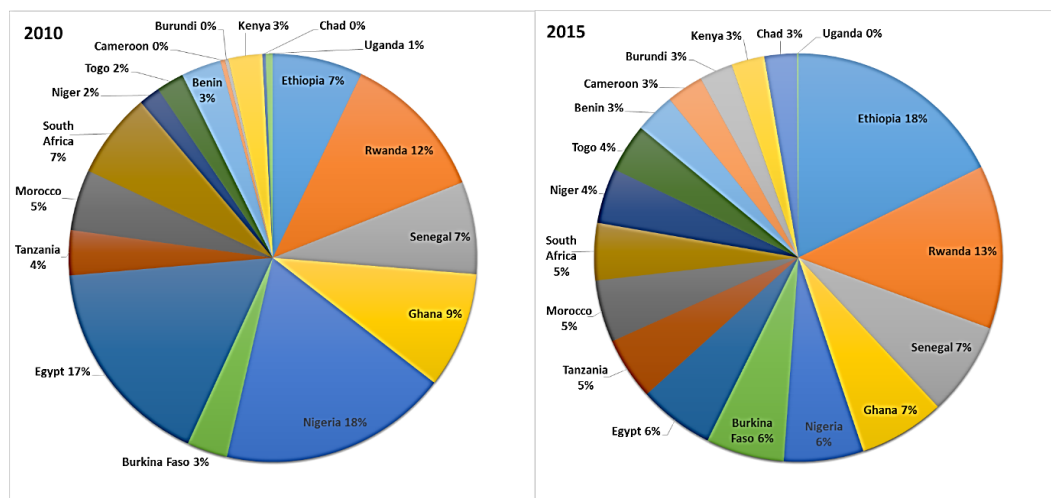


FIGURE 2. TOP AFRICAN CONTRIBUTORS TO UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS, 2010 AND 2015 (UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATION)

diplomatic ties with the international community.

Partnerships between the AU and the UN in the last two decades have been fundamental to asserting the role of the AU in international peacebuilding. Mitigating complex, sometimes intractable conflicts in Africa has enabled the AU to contribute to the UN's long history of peace support operations in global regions. Allen (2023) shows that although the AU cannot stand alone in its peace support operations, the organisation and its member states have the potential to institutionalise achievements and address shortcomings in the current regional security architecture. More importantly, AU-led missions –such as AMISOM and AMIB–across Africa have shown that there is significant progress for the AU to gain greater mileage in international peacebuilding

efforts though institutional challenges continue to impede its operations.

CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE AFRICAN UNION

The study revealed that while the AU aspires to lead Africa into the future through the ideals of African renaissance and Pan-Africanism towards an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, major challenges abound which have a bearing on the organisation's efforts to foster peacebuilding locally and internationally. These challenges are founded on three inter-related aspects that historically affected the OAU and now the AU, as Africa's lead institution. They relate to recurring conflicts in a continent comprising poor and/or developing countries with limited

financial capacity to fund the AU's activities in continental and international programmes that could usefully grant the AU relevant experience and participation at a global level.

Persisting Conflicts on the Continent

Moffat (2022) identifies challenges relating to continued acts of unconstitutional changes of government. In this regard, Moffat has argued that the AU has been accused of being slow to act on the actions of coup makers (as was the case in Togo in 2005, Mauritania in 2005 and 2007, Mali in 2012, and Central African Republic in 2013, among other countries) pointing to inadequate measures of addressing unconstitutional changes of governments. The persisting challenges on the continent reflect the interconnectedness of African states and the challenges the AU faces in regulating continental problems. While the philosophy of *Ubuntu* emphasises that the well-being of one state directly affects the well-being of others, promoting a sense of solidarity, mutual responsibility, and respect for all member states has been an insurmountable task (Ajitoni, 2024). Despite the AU's strides towards continental peace and security, the persistent conflict within African states is a key drawback to the institution's aspirations and performance. Renewed hostilities in the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2025 show the problematic nature, and history of protracted conflicts in Africa, while failures of the AU in Libya (2011-2012) still

affirm the limits of the AU in continental peacebuilding.

Funding

The funding challenges persist as the AU remains dependent on external funding for its operations. Moffat (2022) cites an example of the 2022 AU commission budget of US\$650 million (US\$176 million for operations, US\$195 million for programmes and US\$279 million for peace support), of which 66% was to come from international partners, 31% from member states, and 3% from the administrative and maintenance funds. This demonstrates the challenge of the AU to realise its goal of self-financing its budget. Apuuli (2020) has also shown that the major challenges facing the AU include funding and logistical inadequacies. Apuuli (2019) further notes that since the 1960s, financing African integration projects including peacekeeping and peace support has been problematic as the African integration agenda has been characterised by a low commitment of AU members to finance the organisation's budget and the heavy reliance on external sources. With persistent conflicts in Africa's poor countries, the vast majority of finances is directed towards peace support operations while limiting funding for development projects. While these financial limitations have a bearing on the AU's capacity to participate in international peacebuilding, evidently the greater impact is on

the inability for the institution to solve African problems first.

Logistical (In)Capacities

Further, the failure to build national logistics capabilities by armies in Africa, reflects the reality that most African states relied upon foreign intervention to protect their sovereignty and external security during two or three post-independence decades (Apuuli, 2020). This is further worsened by the continued outbreaks of violence which has meant that AU's peace support and peacekeeping institutions, and initiatives are always under pressure. For example, by the 1990s, it was clear that the OAU could not enhance the prospects for continental security following protracted conflicts in Angola, Sierra Leone, and the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Scholars assert that, as an institution, the OAU faced many operational limitations leading to a prolonged weakness in averting many of the armed conflicts within the continent (Murithi, 2017). Key to the OAU's failure in continental peacebuilding was the institution's mandate to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each of its member states, leading to a marked limitation in its ability to participate in sustainable peace agreements in Africa's fragile states. Apuuli (2020) rightly remarks that as one conflict is managed, others break out leading to the AU always acting as a fire-fighting institution.

The challenges of funding and logistical (in)capacities related to peacebuilding can be understood in relation to the context in which the AU operates. For example, Chigora (2008) notes that the continent grapples with socio-economic challenges characterised by high rates of poverty, unemployment, disease, and inequality, including high population growth, which exerts pressure on the already inadequate national infrastructure and resources. The internal dynamics also manifest at the global context in which the continent's state of being poverty stricken creates a dependence relationship with developed and emerging economies. Importantly, Africa's declining historical economic importance as a raw material supplier has also reduced its leverage in global trade and investment. As such, the poor economic performance and political instability in many African states has not been favourable for private investment, hence perpetuating a cycle of indebtedness.

The challenges cited above continue to negatively affect the AU's position in international affairs. While African states continue to uphold the AU's principle of non-alignment and maintain a neutral and non-aligned stance in global affairs, this article finds that the AU is under-recognised and under-utilised in global peace support operations. Despite Africa's long-standing position as a neutral mediator, its leaders are minimally engaged to proactively participate in mediating international conflicts—a situation that

is highly influenced by the many challenges impeding the functions of the AU at continental and global levels. The foregoing challenges of the AU in peacebuilding demonstrate that the AU's role in promoting peacebuilding in the Korean Peninsula would be compromised by grave institutional limitations. This entails that the operations of the AU in peacebuilding need to exploit the inherent resources in the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* to formulate an agenda for peacebuilding that can be assimilated within prevailing efforts to build peace in geopolitically sensitive global regions. Concerted efforts in international peacebuilding require the participation of continental institutions such as the AU to engage in building relationships of trust and willingness to negotiate a sustainable peace in the Korean Peninsula. Enhanced partnerships between the UN and AU could strengthen diplomatic efforts, as the AU's historically neutral stance towards the conflict could effectively be more appealing in negotiations, particularly to an increasingly isolated and often conflictual North Korea.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN UNION ENGAGEMENT

Despite the myriad of challenges alluded to above, this article finds that

creating routes for which the AU can gain legitimacy in international peacebuilding efforts would rightly grant more relevant experience for the institution to act decisively in Africa's conflicts. Based on this premise, this section explores the potential participation of the AU in international peacebuilding while strengthening the institution's role in continental peace efforts. The article argues that despite existing diplomatic approaches and sanctions against North Korea as an aggressor, these strategies require long-term neutral mediation to the conflict in line with article 33 of the UN charter⁸. The findings herein affirm that the historical position of many member states of the AU, as neutral and non-aligned state(s) within the UN, is an opportunity for greater engagement for an African-led agenda for peace in the Korean Peninsula. Peacebuilding scholars assert that addressing imbalanced power dynamics in relations between conflicting parties is important to mediating the underlying drivers of contentions, thus paving the way for continued negotiations (Kwaleyela, 2023; Keating & Knight, 2004; Murithi, 2006). While all protracted conflicts are complex, negotiated truces can pave the way for sustainable peace when conflicting parties willingly engage with one another. Despite the 1953 armistice over

8 Article 33 of the UN charter stipulates that 'The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice' (United Nations, n. d.).

the Korean Peninsula, South Korea remains non-signatory while North Korea withdrew from the agreement in 2013⁹. This means that opportunities for future hostilities loom large over the region, while institutions such as the AU, this article argues, must strengthen strategies to engage in international conflicts that affect the African region's strides towards continental stability and development.

The article argues that African leaders need to reposition themselves to implement the continent's foreign policy by building closer ties with the UN. Existing UN efforts need to be consolidated with those of other international actors, including the AU, so that negotiated agreements not only end armed hostilities but also build a consolidated long-term peace globally (Kwaleyela, 2023). In order to increase the AU's legitimacy in international peacebuilding, its neutral stance in international conflicts must be tied to and strike a balance between the UN's responsibility to act and protect in response to crises, such as it was seen in Libya (2011)¹⁰. The AU has no notable role in international conflict outside

Africa, and it is clearly an invisible collection of African states that are yet to be granted their due responsibility in global peacebuilding. Consequently, the section below outlines the proposed pathways in which the AU could contribute to peacebuilding efforts in the Korean Peninsula.

Historically, links between African states and the two Korean nation-states have been cordial and non-aggressive through continued diplomatic and development ties. The friendship and economic partnerships that have been established between the AU and the two Korean states, over the years, pose an opportunity for the continent's agenda for peace in the Korean Peninsula. Jung (2024) notes that the AU has opportunities to promote peacebuilding in the Korean Peninsula due to the diplomatic relations that both South and North Korea developed with Africa since the Cold War. For instance, in 2009, an AU declaration in Sirte (Libya) reaffirmed the partnership and commitment to dialogue and economic cooperation between Africa and the Republic of South Korea (Zondi, 2017). This commitment was reinforced by a

9 On July 27, 1953, military commanders from the United States (representing the United Nations Command), the Korean People's Army, and Chinese People's Volunteer Army signed the Korean Armistice Agreement, ending roughly three years of fighting of the 1950-1953 Korean War. Despite this armistice, The Korean Peninsula remains in a state of war (United Nations Command, n. d.).

10 Following the AU's failure to act decisively during a crisis in Libya 2011, the UN Security Council resolution 1973 was instituted in March 2011 following sustained war crimes and crimes against humanity faced by the Libyan civilians. This event has been cited as one of the AU's failures in conflict mediation, leading to the institution's lack of legitimacy in both continental and international peace support operations.

visit from H.E. Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea to the African Union Headquarters, on 27th May 2016, to share Korea's experiences and knowledge to build a collaborative partnership for shared growth and prosperity (AU, 2016). Through cordial relations, the AU could strengthen existing international efforts in dialogue as a key principle and an alternative paradigm drawing on *Ubuntu* to encourage a mediated attempt at peace between the Korean states.

However, while South Korea continues to pursue diplomatic ties to the African continent, North Korea remains evasive to any influence from the international community. The African Union (AU) reports that it holds important agreements with South Korea in partnerships to promote industrialisation and capacity building in Africa's manufacturing sector (AU, 2024). The African-Korean summit was held in 2023 in the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the African Development Bank Groups (MoEF, 2023). Despite the AU and South Korea committing to identify trade and investment opportunities through the Korean-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference (AU, 2016), this does little to improve Africa's position with North Korea. Only through similar engagements with North Korea can the AU propose an Africa-led agenda for peace between the two countries. Thus, Murithi (2006) argues that *Ubuntu* approaches to peace-making and peacebuilding are diplomatically beneficial in AU-UN partnerships and in the

AU's role as a neutral ally to the two Korean states. The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui, urged both South and North Korea to work progressively towards the promotion of dialogue, building confidence, normalising economic and diplomatic ties for the benefit of all Korean people (AU, 2018b).

The article also finds that the AU's commitment to peacebuilding is tied to Agenda 2063, as it seeks to maintain peace at a continental and global level (Birhan, 2024). The institution continues to offer its full support for the declaration of peace and prosperity and calls for the unification of the nations of Korea (Kwaleyela, 2023). In 2018, the AU chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, supported the declaration of the Panmunjeom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula (AU, 2018b). It was a peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and a tremendous contribution to global peace. This declaration was tied to efforts to build on the inter-Korean Summit outcome; to take forward the objective of a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula (AU, 2018a). This strategy resonated with the AU's *Ubuntu* principle to promote a collective agenda and assignment to encourage the participation of the two Korean states in crafting improved political relations.

Zondi (2017, p. 123) notes that the AU's peace interventions are based on multi-disciplinary approaches which enables it to have "capacities to

anticipate, de-escalate, secure, monitor and support post-conflict development” in continental crises. However, this article finds that the inability of the AU to practice these interventions at a global level might not yield the institution’s aspiration for international peace and security. As a result, the AU’s attempts to assimilate and engage in global power structures is dependent on its ability to enhance coordination with the UN and maintain its position as neutral diplomat and ally in peace bargaining processes. The AU could participate in the peacebuilding process in the Korean Peninsula conflict by working with the cooperative partners, such as the North-South cooperation and higher education institutions (Birhan, 2024). This resonates with the African peacebuilding practice emanating from *Ubuntu* that is based on the idea that peace is a collective responsibility requiring the participation of a diverse set of actors to build institutions to sustain it (Kagoro, 2021). As stressed by Ajitoni (2024), *Ubuntu* is anchored on collective responsibility and cooperation and underscores the importance of working together for the common good, whether in familial, social, or economic contexts. The resolution of conflicts through dialogue and understanding, aiming to restore broken relationships between the two Korean states continues to be central to an envisioned role for the AU in building peace in the Korean Peninsula.

Birhan (2024) affirms that key to the AU’s operations at continental

and international level would be to strengthen evidence-based research on peace operations, particularly relating to conflict resolution, peace-making, and peacebuilding. While the AU continues to strengthen ties with international organisations, such as the UN, Khadiagala (2021) argues that it would be important for the institution to seek peer learning frameworks for peacebuilding at a global level. With continued global efforts to resolve protracted conflicts, such as in the Korean Peninsula, the AU requires greater experience through partnerships with the UN. Kwaleyela (2023) notes that the lack of a peace agreement between the two Korean states requires concerted efforts and partnerships to build a relationship of trust with the concerned states in the UN. The AU can use the partnerships that promote the exchange of visits and information between the peacekeeping operations centre in South Korea and the AU’s Peace and Security Council (PSC) Korean African Foundation, (KAF, 2018). During the Fourth African - Korean forum the AU and Korea agreed to support the African Union to consolidate the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and peacebuilding activities in Africa and in the globe (AU, 2016). For instance, the Korea African Foundation (KAF) aims to serve as a platform for collaboration between the private and public sectors and strengthen exchange and cooperation between African countries (KAF, 2018). The cultural

exchange programmes could be used to promote dialogue between the AU and South Korea as they strive to engage with North Korea in peacebuilding efforts.

CONCLUSION

While the AU continues to gain experience in peace support operations in African states, institutional challenges continue to limit its efficacy in such endeavours. This article finds that gaining greater recognition and legitimacy at a global level would facilitate the AU's experience in handling African problems. For this reason, continued efforts within Africa are inherently tied to the experience that the institution can gain at a global level. Stronger links and collaborations with the UN to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts is fundamental to the global engagement of the AU in peacebuilding. As the UN Security Council recognises the AU's role in international peace and security, encouraging partnerships to strengthen regional responses to Africa's conflicts is tied to the institutional participation of the AU in peacebuilding for other global regions.

This article finds that through renewed commitments; the AU is expanding its role in international peace and security but has yet to gain legitimacy as it continues to grapple with persistent and recurring conflicts within the continent. Relatedly, conflict in the African region continues to

demand high financial resourcing from an institution comprised of poor and/or developing countries that cannot meet the demand to finance largescale peace operations. Additionally, logistical (in)capacities suggest that the AU's history of overdependence on external financing and intervention in African problems continues to impede strides towards the recognition of its member states in global power structures. The AU's role in international peace and security outside the continent remains delicate, despite its commitment to proactive engagement and regional solutions, due to these challenges.

Conversely, the article also argues that despite the challenges affecting the AU, the current approaches to continental peacebuilding are built on principles that are fundamental to peacebuilding efforts. The concept of *Ubuntu* emphasises the centrality of mediation, peaceful negotiation and alternative means to dispute resolution in complex and protracted conflicts. This article affirms that institutions, such as the AU, are relevant actors in international partnerships in continued efforts to maintain international peace and security. Specifically, the article posits that though the AU holds little to no direct role in many global efforts for conflict resolution i.e. in the Korean Peninsula, the institution reiterates through diplomatic channels that it unreservedly supports the calls for peace between the two Korean states. Thus, diplomatic ties through economic development between South Korea

and the AU is a desirable outcome for the maintained neutrality of the AU and its member states. On the other hand, North Korea remains closely aligned with some AU member states, providing economic and military cooperation, even though the international community remains wary of these relationships. However, it is clear that these ties between AU members states and the two Korean states maintain Africa's position as a neutral ally in international affairs and grants its lead institution an opportunity to participate in building peace in the Korean Peninsula. With Africa on the rise, the AU must work to assert its role as Africa's lead institution, whilst enhancing partnerships that grant it experience in peacebuilding efforts across global regions.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research on the AU and peacebuilding can focus on exploring the AU's role in other international conflicts to provide a comparative analysis of the role of the AU in international peacebuilding. This is because the current study has demonstrated an account of the AU's peacebuilding initiatives in a single example of international conflict. Further, future research can focus on examining the impact of global geopolitical shifts on the AU's peacebuilding efforts. This is significant as the operations of the AU are closely linked to the wider contextual realities of peacebuilding. Finally, given the AU's challenges, future research can also explore

the innovative financing models for the AU's peacebuilding initiatives to promote sustainability.

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APPENDIX. AU-LED OPERATIONS IN AFRICA SINCE 2000 (ALLEN, 2023)

AFRICAN-LED PEACE OPERATIONS SINCE 2000				
Mission	Countries	Year(s)	Authorized Personnel	Authorizing Entities
ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)	Liberia/Sierra Leone	1990–2000	7,000	ECOWAS
OAU's Joint Monitoring Commission (OAU JMC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo	DRC	1999–2000	43	OAU
OAU/AU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea (OLMEE/AULMEE)	Ethiopia-Eritrea	2000–2008	43	OAU/AU
OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros (OMIC 2)	Comoros	2000–2001	14	OAU
OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros (OMIC 3)	Comoros	2001–2002	39	OAU
CEN-SAD Force	CAR	2001–2002	300	CEN-SAD
ECCAS Central African Multinational Force (FOMUC)	CAR	2002–2008	380	ECCAS
ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL)	Liberia	2003	3,600	UN, ECOWAS
ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI)	Côte d'Ivoire	2003	1,500	UN, ECOWAS
AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	Burundi	2003–4	3,250	AU
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS I)	Sudan	2004–2005	4,400	AU
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS II)	Sudan	2005–2007	7,700	AU
AU Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC)	Comoros	2004	41	AU
AU Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC)	Comoros	2006	1,260	AU
Operation Democracy in the Comoros	Comoros	2008	1,800	AU
AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	Somalia	2007–22	22,000	AU
AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission in the Comoros (MAES)	Comoros	2007–8	356	AU
ECCAS Peace Consolidation Mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX)	CAR	2008–2013	2,000	ECCAS
AU-UN Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	Sudan	2008–21	21,600	AU, UN
AU Regional Coordination Initiative for Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)	CAR, DRC, South Sudan, Uganda	2011–2018	5,000	AU
ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB)	Guinea-Bissau	2012–2020	629	ECOWAS
African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)	Mali	2012–13	9,620	AU, UN
African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA)	CAR	2013–14	5,700	AU, UN
AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) Mission	Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone	2014–2015	800	AU
AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts Mission in Burundi	Burundi	2015–2021	200	AU
Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)	Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria	2015–	10,000	AU
ECOWAS Intervention in The Gambia (ECOMIG)	The Gambia	2017–	8,000	ECOWAS
G5 Sahel Joint Force	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger	2017–	5,600	AU
Accra Initiative	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, and Togo	2017–	10,000	Accra Initiative
AU Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG)	The Gambia	2017–2021	8	AU
SADC Prevention Mission to Lesotho (SAPMIL)	Lesotho	2018	269	SADC
AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in the DRC (ASEDCO) Mission	DRC	2019	850	AU
AU Military Observer Mission to the Central African Republic (MOUACA)	CAR	2020–	34	AU
SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)	Mozambique	2021–	2,000	SADC
AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)	Somalia	2022–	22,000	AU
EAC Intervention in the DRC	DRC	2022–	12,000	EAC
ECOWAS Stabilization Support Mission in Guinea-Bissau (SSMGB)	Guinea-Bissau	2022–	630	ECOWAS
AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM)	Ethiopia	2022–	10	AU