

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DISCUSSANT NOTES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) faces mounting challenges in fulfilling its mandate to maintain international peace and security. Geopolitical tensions have weakened the UN Security Council (UNSC), while its peacekeeping operations in Africa have increasingly failed to deliver sustainable peace. The adoption of UNSC Resolution 2719 on December 21, 2023, signals a shift toward African Union (AU)-led peace support operations (PSOs), granting the AU greater authority and responsibility in addressing conflicts on the continent. This transition underscores the AU's emerging role as a co-leader in global peacekeeping efforts and highlights the need for reimagined multilateralism ahead of the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024.

2. THE DECLINE OF UN PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA

UN peacekeeping in Africa has suffered from declining effectiveness and credibility. Missions such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Missions in Mali (MINUSMA) and the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) have faced widespread criticism. These operations often fail to protect civilians, resolve conflicts, or achieve their mandates, and have been marred by allegations of misconduct.

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide exposed the UN's inability to respond to crises despite clear early warnings. More recently, the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) called for MONUSCO's withdrawal due to its ineffectiveness. This dissatisfaction reflects broader concerns about the limitations of UN peacekeeping: inadequate resources, misaligned mandates, and a disconnect from local contexts.

As a result, African states are increasingly turning to regional solutions and bilateral partnerships to address conflicts, pushing the UN to rethink its approach to peacekeeping.

3. TOWARD A NEW MODEL OF MULTILATERALISM

The failure of traditional peacekeeping highlights the need for systemic reform in global governance. The UN Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report (2021) calls for a

reimagined multilateralism that addresses today’s complex global challenges, including conflict and climate change.

The upcoming UN Summit of the Future (September 2024) will build on this vision through the proposed “Pact for the Future.” Central to this reimagining is the recognition of regional organizations like the AU as vital actors in peace and security. UNSC Resolution 2719 is a key step in this direction, reflecting the transition toward decentralized, regional leadership in addressing conflicts.

4. THE AFRICAN UNION’S LEADERSHIP IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The African Union (AU) has become increasingly central to addressing conflicts on the continent. Under Article 53 of the UN Charter, the UNSC can delegate certain responsibilities to regional organizations. Over the years, AU-led PSOs have emerged as more flexible and adaptive alternatives to traditional UN peacekeeping.

AU peace operations often differ from UN missions in key ways:

1. **Rapid Deployment:** Unlike UN operations, which require extensive planning, AU-led missions can deploy quickly to crisis zones.
2. **Broader Mandates:** AU operations are not limited by the consent of host governments and can take more robust actions.
3. **Regional Focus:** AU missions draw on regional expertise, offering greater cultural and operational alignment.

Examples of AU-led interventions include the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), now transitioned to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which played a critical role in stabilizing the country. Other sub-regional initiatives, such as the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), demonstrate the effectiveness of African-led responses to conflicts.

Despite their advantages, AU missions face significant challenges, including funding shortages, operational inefficiencies, and allegations of misconduct. UNSCR 2719 seeks to address these gaps by emphasizing predictable funding, co-leadership, and strengthened oversight for AU-led missions.

5. UNSCR 2719: A PARADIGM SHIFT?

UNSCR 2719 formalizes AU–UN collaboration in peace support operations, marking a turning point in global governance. The resolution recognizes the AU Peace and Security Council’s role in leading PSOs and emphasizes predictable and sustainable funding for AU-led initiatives.

Key aspects of UNSCR 2719 include:

1. **Predictable Financing:** The resolution prioritizes consistent funding mechanisms for AU operations, including the possibility of using UN-assessed contributions.
2. **Hybrid Missions:** It endorses hybrid AU–UN operations, building on past models like the African Union–United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).
3. **Regional Leadership:** By supporting AU-led PSOs, the resolution underscores the importance of regional organizations in addressing conflicts.

However, tensions persist over control and accountability. African leaders argue that UN funding for AU missions should reflect respect for the AU's capabilities rather than framing it as subcontracting. To succeed, both organizations must clarify roles, ensure financial transparency, and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring human rights compliance.

6. A NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE

The UN Secretary-General's 2023 policy brief, *A New Agenda for Peace*, highlights the growing gap between peacekeeping mandates and operational realities. It advocates for "new-generation" missions that go beyond traditional ceasefire monitoring to include robust stabilization efforts in active conflict zones.

Regional organizations like the AU are uniquely positioned to lead these missions. Their proximity to conflict zones, deeper understanding of local dynamics, and ability to deploy quickly make them more effective in volatile contexts.

This approach aligns with the recommendations of the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), which called for the primacy of politics, inclusivity, and flexibility in peacekeeping. UNSCR 2719 builds on these lessons, promoting a more adaptable and cooperative model of conflict management.

7. ENHANCING THE AU'S CAPACITY FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

UNSCR 2719 presents an opportunity to strengthen the AU's capacity to lead PSOs. Key priorities include:

1. **Primacy of Politics:** The resolution emphasizes the need for political solutions to conflicts. Investing in early warning systems, mediation, and diplomacy is crucial for preventing violence before it escalates.
2. **Collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs):** RECs play a critical role in addressing sub-regional conflicts. Closer coordination between the AU and RECs can enhance the coherence and effectiveness of PSOs.
3. **Joint Oversight Mechanisms:** UNSCR 2719 mandates biannual joint reports from the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson, ensuring accountability and fostering collaboration.

By addressing these priorities, the AU can position itself as a global leader in peace and security governance while strengthening its operational effectiveness.

8. CONCLUSION

The adoption of UNSCR 2719 marks the end of traditional UN peacekeeping in Africa and the beginning of a new era of co-leadership between the AU and the UN. This shift reflects a broader transformation in global governance, where regional organizations like the AU play a central role in addressing conflicts.

As the world prepares for the UN Summit of the Future, the AU has a unique opportunity to shape the implementation of UNSCR 2719 to align with African priorities. By leveraging its emerging leadership, the AU can redefine the governance of peace and security, making it more inclusive, responsive, and effective for the 21st century.