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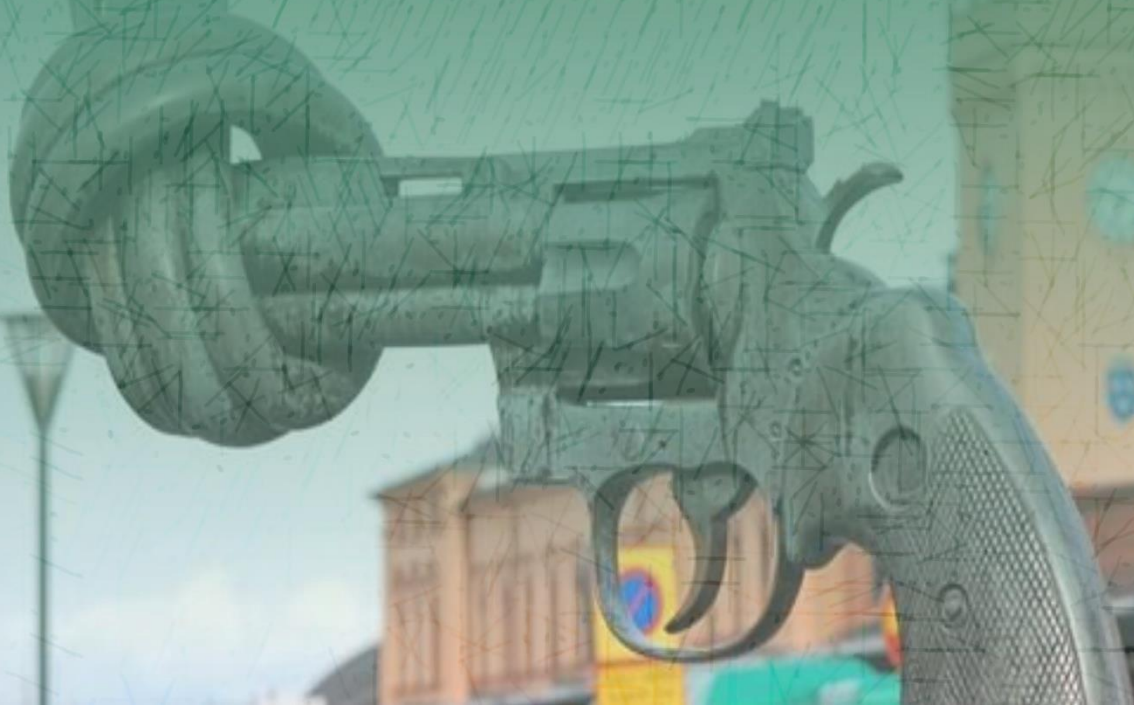
WHO IS REALLY SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA?

Progress and Next Steps on Localising Humanitarian
Aid and Peace and Security in Africa

A Policy Brief by



**DEVELOPMENT
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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
Abbreviations	ii
Introduction	1
Methodology	2
PART 1: PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA	4
1.1 The History of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa	4
1.2 Current Status of Peacekeeping Operations	5
1.3 Peacekeeping Operations Funding	8
1.4 Effectiveness of African-led Peacekeeping Operations	9
1.4.1 Swift Action with Lean Staff and Shorter Operations	10
1.4.2 Lower Conflict Recurrence Rate	11
1.5 African-led Operations Challenges.....	11
1.5.1 Higher Casualties and Misconduct.....	11
1.5.2 Limited Resources	12
1.5.3 Lack of Standardisation and Policy Uniformity	13
1.5.4 Limited Focus on Humanitarian Activities.....	13
PART 2: THE HUMANITARIAN AID LANDSCAPE IN AFRICA.....	14
2.1 Localisation Challenges in Africa	15
REFLECTIONS AND CALL TO ACTION	17
3.1 The African Union and RECs	18
3.2 Donors.....	18
3.3 The UN and Humanitarian Aid Organisations.....	18

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAP - Accountability to Affected Populations

AFMISA - African-led International Support Operation in Mali

AMISOM - African Union Operation to Somalia

AMISOMHMLU - AMISOM Humanitarian Liaison Unit

AU – African Union

C4D – Communication for Development

ECCAS - Economic Community of Central African States

ECOMIL– ECOWAS Operation in Liberia

ECOMOG – West African States Monitoring Group

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons

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MINUSCA - Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Operation in the Central African Republic

MINUSMA - United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Operation in Mali

MONUSCO - United Nations Organization Stabilization Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

REC – Regional Economic Bloc

SADC – Southern African Development Community

SAMIM - SADC Operation in Mozambique

UN – United Nations

UNASMIL - United Nations Operation in Sierra Leone

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

UNMISS – United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNOMSIL - United Nations Observer Operation in Sierra Leone

WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

INTRODUCTION

Anecdotally from news programmes on TV or internet sources, it feels as though global conflicts have increased in recent years.¹ But this feeling is backed by data - conflict increased by over 40% between 2020 and 2023.² Meanwhile, data also indicates that 2022 was the bloodiest year since the 1994 Rwanda Genocide with drone attacks increasing by 40.8% in the same year. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts will likely contribute to a further significant increase in 2024.

However, a rise in conflict means a greater need for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid. But the biggest question is: what should peacekeeping and humanitarian aid look like for Africa to ensure it is most effective? How “localised” should it all be? In particular, what is the scope for and benefit of “African Solutions to African Problems”, if any?

Localised solutions begin with the continent and Africa has taken steps towards this. In 2013, African leaders launched the “Silencing the Guns” initiative.³ This flagship programme by the African Union (AU) aims to end and prevent all conflict, war and genocide by the year 2030. Tied to this is Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 that hopes for a peaceful Africa.⁴ However, the continent requires sustainable and sufficient funding to both silence the guns and maintain peace before, during and after conflict.

These issues are particularly crucial to explore in the context of the recent December 2023 decision by the UN Security Council to fund African Union-led operations on a case-by-case basis⁵. The question is, when will this actually make sense?

Figure 1 shows the steps taken during conflict. Peacekeeping has three parts: first, it is an intervention - second, it seeks to bring the conflicting parties to an agreement; and third, it aims to either bring immediate or long-term ceasefire.⁶ Peacekeeping also involves more actions such as conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, peace enforcement, and peace making. Hence, some peacekeeping operations have worked in tandem with humanitarian aid organisations – throughout the whole process.

¹ Vision on Humanity <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/conflict-trends-in-2023-a-growing-threat-to-global-peace/>

² Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project <https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/#:-:text=The%20world%20is%20getting%20far,both%20Afghanistan%20and%20Syria%20raged.>

³ Silencing the Guns <https://au.int/en/flagships/silencing-guns-2020>

⁴ Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

⁵ Security Council Opens Door to UN Funding for African-led Peace Missions, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2719 (2023) <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15544.doc.htm>

⁶ United Nations Peacekeeping Terminology United Nations Peacekeeping Terminology <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology#:~:text=Peacekeeping%20is%20one%20among%20a,peace%20enforcement>

Figure 1: Composition of Peacekeeping



The steps taken after conflict – as shown above – can be run by the African governments or can be led by the United Nations (UN).

But how effective are these operations – especially comparing those run by the UN – versus others run or managed by African governments, for example? Does the degree of localisation of the operations or humanitarian aid matter to the outcomes?

Development Reimagined has therefore prepared this policy brief to help answer the following key questions: what is the history of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian aid in Africa; what costs and challenges have existing peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations faced; has this varied by degree of localisation and; what further can be done to localise peacekeeping or humanitarian approaches.

This brief is intended for various development, foreign policy and security stakeholders including the African Union Peace and Security Council, African Regional Organisations, Humanitarian Aid Agencies and Policy Makers in the humanitarian aid and peace and security sector.

METHODOLOGY

For this brief, Development Reimagined (DR) used both qualitative and quantitative data collected through desktop research and analysis. Our data compilation process was undertaken through desk research, drawing on a wide range of **entirely public sources** including official government sources such as state statistical agencies and ministry websites as well as non-government sources such as media reports and databases maintained by organizations such as the UN, AU, etc. Where information is available, we have tried as much as possible to include trend data to give context.

Although different definitions may be used by others, we have chosen to use the following definitions for this policy brief for as much clarity as possible:

1. **African-led peacekeeping operations** - Military intervention in African countries mandated by the African Union, regional organisations, and ad hoc interventions
2. **United Nations-led peacekeeping operations** - Military intervention in African countries mandated by the United Nations Security Council

3. **Localisation** – The transfer of control, decision making and resources to the community given it is best placed to understand its own needs.
4. **Local Actors** – Local actors encompass civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) functioning within a specific geographically defined subnational area of an aid recipient country.
5. **National Actors** - National actors are organisations headquartered in and operating within the aid recipient country, engaging across multiple subnational regions.

There are some important limitations to our methodology. First, much data is missing – for example some peacekeeping missions do not disclose their exact budgets. This means that results reported here could be incomplete or underestimated. These challenges notwithstanding, we are confident that available data we present in this report helps to paint a reliable and fair picture of UN and African-led peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

Figure 2: Methodology



PART 1: PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA



Throughout the years, peacekeeping in Africa has been authorised and led by different groups – the UN, the AU and the different regional blocs within the continent. There have been operations with as little as 12 personnel as well as others such as AMISOM with as many as 20,000 personnel. In light of this, the section below will delve into the historical and current patterns of peacekeeping in Africa and assess the successes and challenges of the different types of operations.

1.1 The History of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa

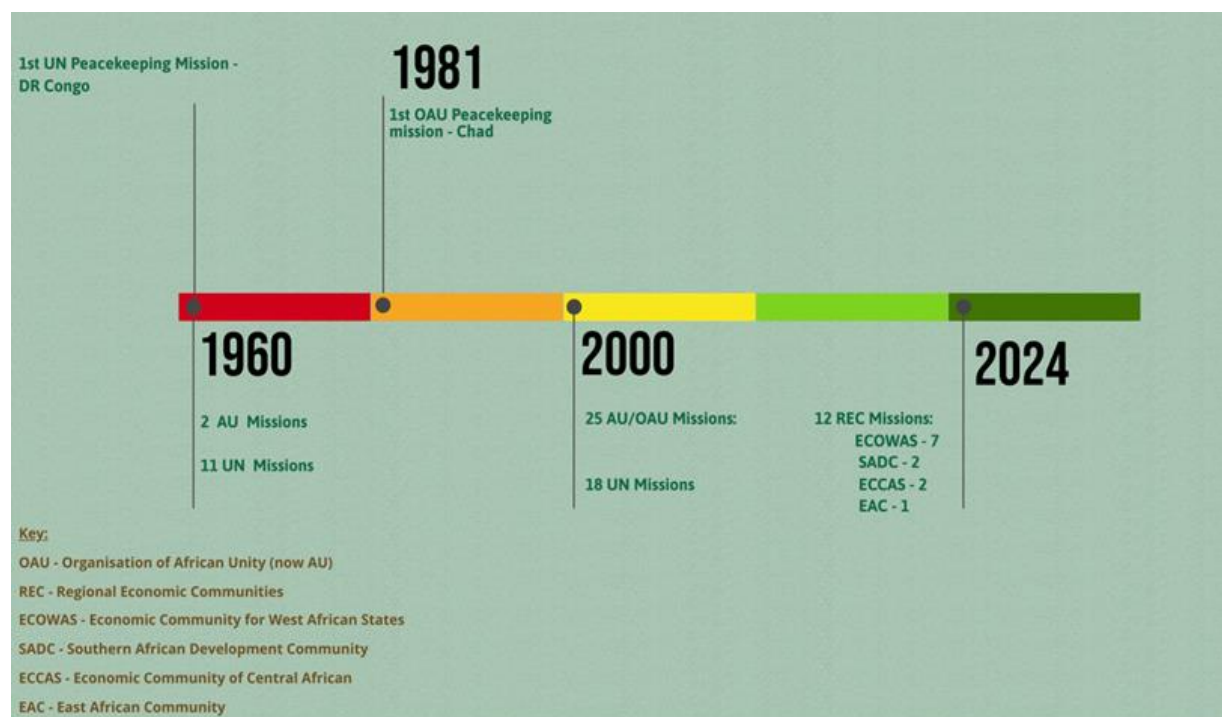
As **Figure 3** illustrates, the first peacekeeping operation in Africa was mandated by the UN Security Council in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1960. Since then, the UN Security Council (UNSC) has authorised 26 peacekeeping operations up until 2020 while Africa has authorised 36 since 2000.⁷ It is important to note that Africa only authorised two operations before 2000 - the UN had by then authorised 11. Since the 2000's there started to be an increasing appetite for “African Solutions to African Problems” (ASAP).

Furthermore, Africa has authorised different African operations. Of the 36 Africa-led operations – 24 were authorised by the African Union and its predecessor the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The remaining 12 were based on and led by the different regional blocs and are distributed as follows: ECOWAS **five**, SADC and ECCAS with **two** each, EAC and CEN-SAD have each authorised **one** and while the Accra Initiative authorised **one**. The Accra Initiative is particularly interesting as it was a collaborative intergovernmental cooperation mechanism created to prevent

⁷ Africa Center for Strategic Studies <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-led-peace-operations-a-crucial-tool-for-peace-and-security/>

the spillover effects of terrorism from the Sahel while working towards curbing extremism. It was led by Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Niger and Togo.⁸

Figure 3: Timeline of Peacekeeping Operations in Africa



1.2 Current Status of Peacekeeping Operations

Although conflict is worldwide, Africa continues to have more peacekeeping operations compared to any other region and currently has **14** ongoing peacekeeping operations. **Five** are UN-led while **nine** are led by the continent. In the last decade, the UN has only authorised one new operation - the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Operation in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) that was authorised on 10th April 2014. Overall, Congo has had the most interventions over time with MONUSCO being the most significant. To provide a clearer picture, **Figure 4** and **Figure 5** depict the location of the ongoing 15 peacekeeping missions.

Figure 4: United Nations Led Operations in Africa since 1999

⁸ The Accra Initiative <https://ecfr.eu/special/african-cooperation/accra-initiative/>

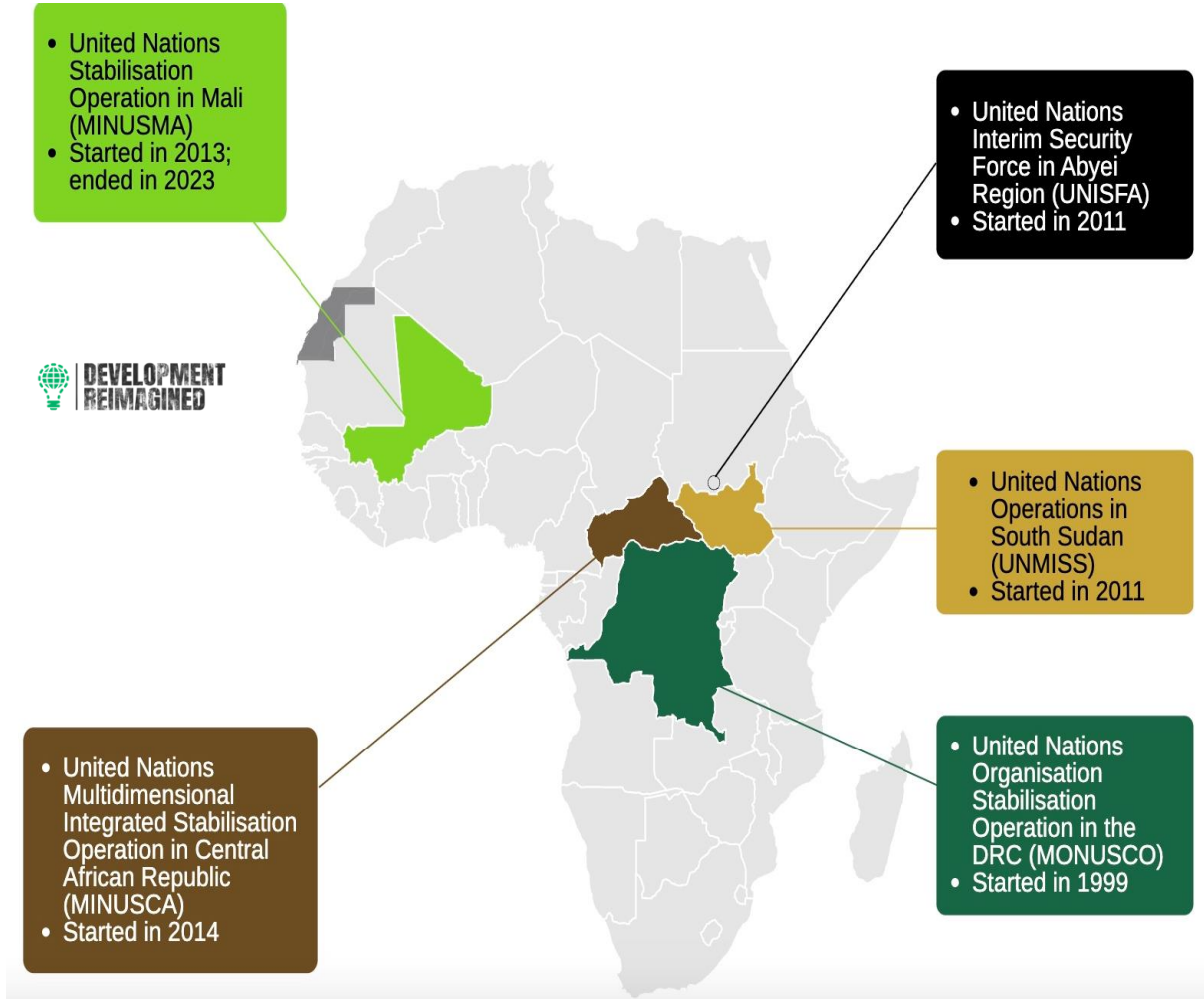
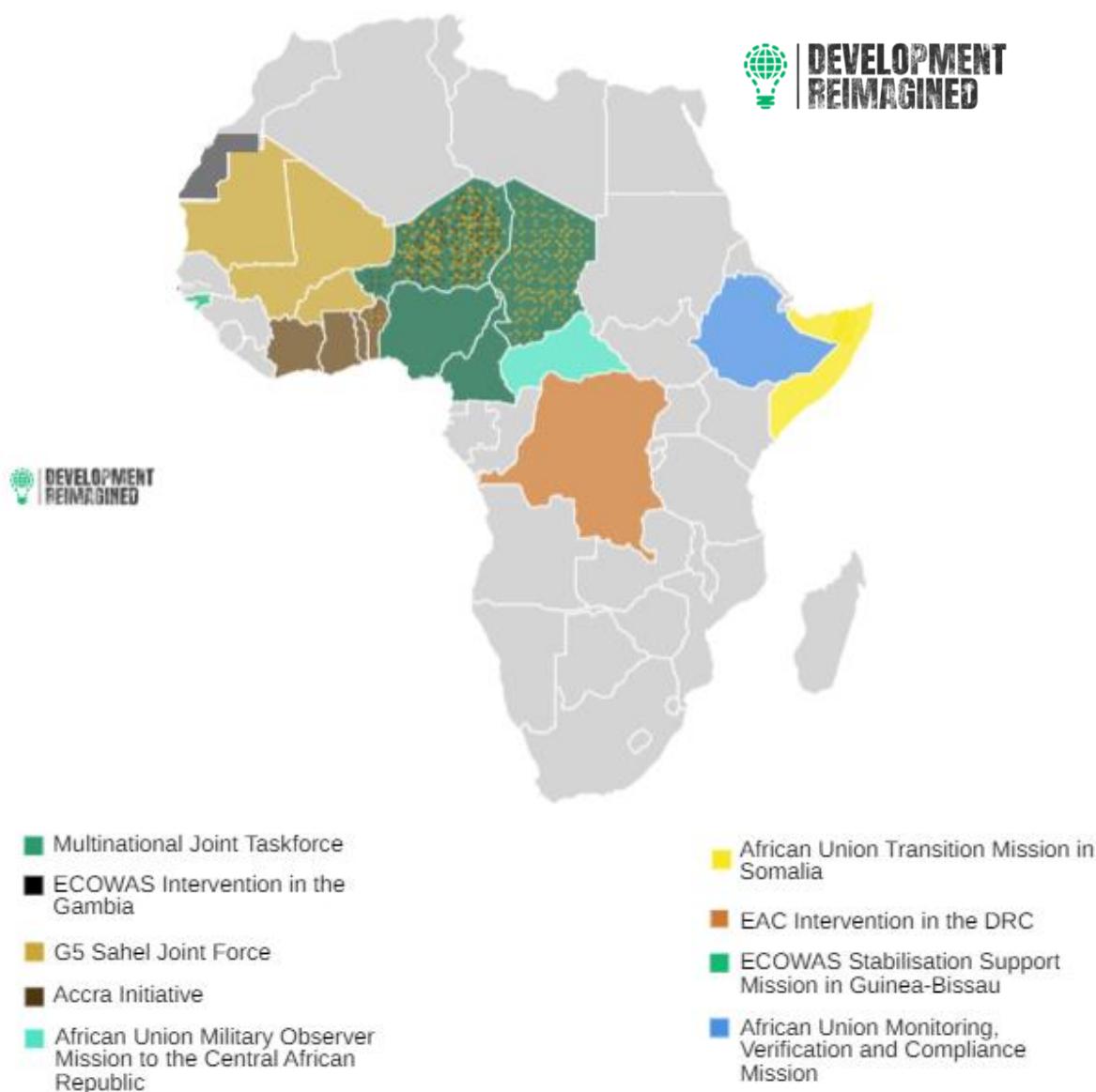


Figure 5: African-Led Peacekeeping Operations in Africa since 1999



Some UN-led operations on the continent have been extended – for example most recently UNMISS in South Sudan. UNMISS was extended to 30th April 2025 by the UN Security Council – with 13 votes for but two abstentions – Russia and China – ⁹ who cited a lack of ability of the resolution to account for South Sudan’s needs.¹⁰

MINUSCA was also extended till the 15th of November 2024. The operation’s mandate continued to be the protection of civilians, support state authority among many other functions. It is also

⁹ <https://www.eyeradio.org/china-russia-explain-why-they-abstained-from-vote-extending-unmiss-mandate/>

¹⁰ UN Security Council extends South Sudan mission mandate for 1 year <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/un-security-council-extends-south-sudan-mission-mandate-for-1-year/3205723>

important to note that the UN Security Council vote to extend this was decided by 14 against one abstention by Russia¹¹ - noting that most concerns were not addressed.¹²

As for the African-led operations, the G5 Sahel Joint Force was started in 2017 and has made progress especially in acting swiftly in cases of emergency. However, it continues to face financial challenges and this concern is consistently expressed by representatives of the Joint Force and UN representatives.¹³

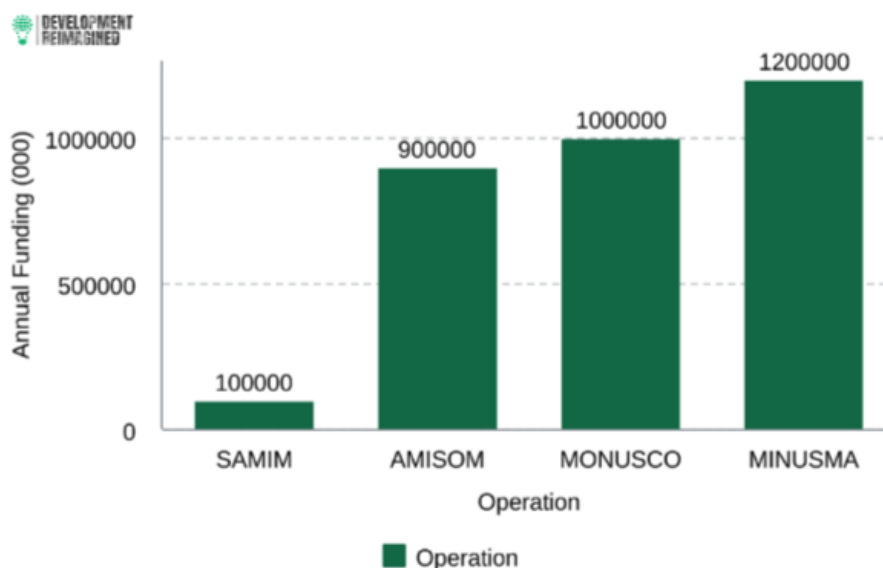
1.3 Peacekeeping Operations Funding

“SAMIM is facing some financial problems. We also have to take care of our own troops, and we would have difficulty paying for SAMIM”, “our countries are not managing to raise the necessary money.”

The data is very clear that African-led operations face significant financial challenges. **Figure 6** below compares funding for a selection of two African-led operations - AMISOM and SAMIM - and two UN-led operations - MONUSCO and MINUSMA.

According to our calculations from available data, African-led operations have cost **10 times less** compared to those led by the UN.

Figure 6: Funding of African-led versus UN-led Operations in Africa



¹¹ Security Council Renews Mandate of UN Mission in Central African Republic, Adopting Resolution 2709 (2023) <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15493.doc.htm#:~:text=The%20Security%20Council%20today%20decided,political%20security%20and%20institutional%20conditions>

¹² Central African Republic: Vote on MINUSCA’s Mandate Renewal <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2023/11/central-african-republic-vote-on-minuscas-mandate-renewal.php>

¹³ Amid Severe Instability in Sahel, Joint Force Needs More Predictable Funding, Global Support to Combat Violent Extremism, Peace Operations Chief Tells Security Council <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14699.doc.htm>

Reports and data indicate that MONUSCO was and continues to be one of the most expensive peacekeeping operations in the world - receiving at least **US\$ 1 billion** per year.¹⁴ On average, it is estimated to have received **US\$ 850 billion** throughout the operation. As for MINUSMA, data from the United Nations reveals that it was the most expensive operation. Its approved annual budgets were up to **US\$ 1.2 billion** per year.¹⁵

However, data tells a different story for African-led operations.¹⁶ AMISOM – led by the AU - received **US\$ 900 million** in 2016¹⁷ and reports indicate donors expressed their fatigue while funding the operation.¹⁸ SAMIM – led by SADC - in Mozambique received **US\$ 100 million** for its activities Cabo Delgado in 2021, having requested **US\$ 300 million**¹⁹

This financial gap has consequences. For instance, SAMIM announced its intention to withdraw from Cabo Delgado in July of 2024 citing financial challenges²⁰ and also stated that it had chosen to focus its efforts on the DRC. In fact, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Verónica Macamo is quoted saying, “SAMIM is facing some financial problems. We also have to take care of our own troops, and we would have difficulty paying for SAMIM...our countries are not managing to raise the necessary money”. These financial challenges have led to unpaid salaries and food shortages for the troops. Regardless of these challenges, SAMIM has been considered successful in some cases. As of 2023 – violence in Cabo Delgado decreased by **71%** due to SAMIM’s operations. However, as soon as SAMIM announced its intention to withdraw, the violence increased spreading to other provinces in Mozambique.

Financial constraints have not only affected operational personnel but also the people facing instability. SADC should not have had to make a choice between Mozambique and the DRC due to financial constraints – but it did.

1.4 Effectiveness of African-led Peacekeeping Operations

As stated above, there is an increased appetite for African-led operations. However, it is paramount to look into the effectiveness of these peacekeeping operations, including in comparison to UN-led operations.

¹⁴ The East African <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/un-official-urges-responsible-peacekeepers-exit-from-drc-4262462>

¹⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/operation/minusma>

¹⁶ Security Council Opens Door to UN Funding for African-led Peace Operations, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2719 , United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (2023) [https://reliefweb.int/report/world/security-council-opens-door-un-funding-african-led-peace-operations-unanimously-adopting-resolution-2719-2023#:~:text=you%20looking%20for%3F-.Security%20Council%20Opens%20Door%20to%20UN%20Funding%20for%20African%20led,Unanimously%20Adopting%20Resolution%202719%20\(2023\)](https://reliefweb.int/report/world/security-council-opens-door-un-funding-african-led-peace-operations-unanimously-adopting-resolution-2719-2023#:~:text=you%20looking%20for%3F-.Security%20Council%20Opens%20Door%20to%20UN%20Funding%20for%20African%20led,Unanimously%20Adopting%20Resolution%202719%20(2023))

¹⁷ Global Observatory <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/01/amisom-african-union-peacekeeping-financing/>

¹⁸ Relief Web <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/reforming-au-operation-somalia>

¹⁹ OCHA Services <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/sadc-begins-peace-building-support-programme-northern-mozambique>

²⁰ SAMIM leaving Mozambique for lack of funds <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/samim-leaving-mozambique-for-lack-of-funds-256162/>

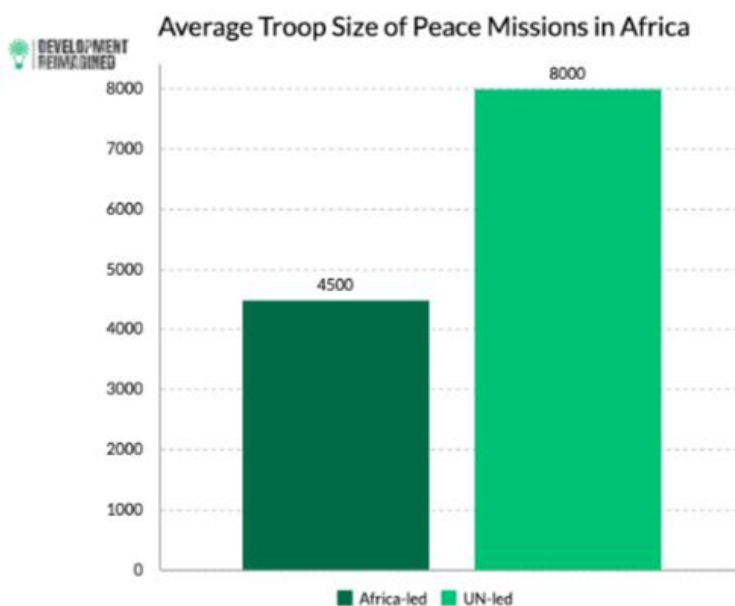
1.4.1 SWIFT ACTION WITH LEAN STAFF AND SHORTER OPERATIONS

As shown in **Figure 7**, African-led operations consist of an average troop size of **4,500** and operate with approximately **50%** fewer personnel than the UN whose average around **8,000** troops. Not only does this signify efficiency but also proves the ability to achieve outcomes with limited resources.

In addition to smaller troop sizes, Africa’s lead time is less. Lead time is the period between the decision to deploy and the actual deployment of troops. The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia (ECOMIL) peacekeeping operation’s lead time in 2003 was three weeks after the signing of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement.²¹ This compares to UN lead time that is estimated to be six months.²² Additionally, ECOMIL demonstrated the ability of African-led operations to respond with fewer personnel given that its troops size was **3,563** troops from Nigeria, Mali and Senegal.

The swift response speaks to a more localised understanding and approach to the situation. The localisation also speaks to the shorter average time African operations take to complete an operation. Data shows that African-led operations on average take **three and a half years** compared to the average **six years** taken by the UN-led operations.

Figure 7: Average Troops Size of Peace Operations in Africa



²¹ Nate D.F. Allen, African-Led Peace Operations: A Crucial Tool for Peace and Security, African Center for Strategic Studies (2023), p4

<https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-led-peace-operations-a-crucial-tool-for-peace-and-security/#:~:text=deployed%20to%20Liberia%20on%20September%209%2C%202003%2C%203%20weeks%20after%20the%20signing%20of%20a%20comprehensive%20peace%20agreement%2C>

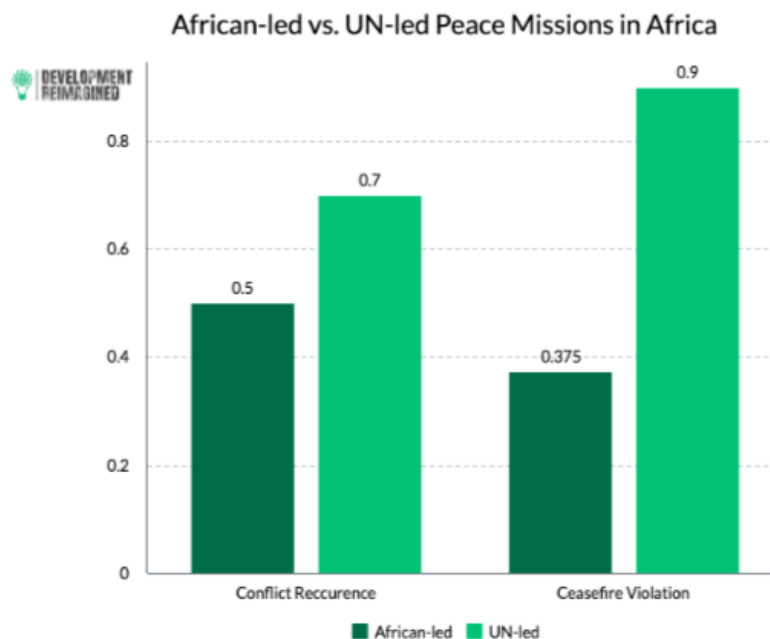
²² United Nations Peacekeeping <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/military>

1.4.2 LOWER CONFLICT RECURRENCE RATE

According to our calculations and as shown in **Figure 8**, African led operations have a lower average rate of conflict recurrence at **0.5** compared to UN-led operations at **0.7**. Conflict recurrence rates go hand-in-hand with ceasefire effectiveness. Our calculations reveal that African-led operations exhibit a lower rate of ceasefire violations standing at **0.375** compared to those led by the UN standing at **0.9**.

The most reasonable explanation for this is the localised approach to peacekeeping operations by the continent. A localised approach can only be achieved by understanding the situation at hand leading to effectively dealing with the existing root causes of conflict. Therefore, the reoccurrence rate will be lower leading to adherence of the ceasefire agreements.

Figure 8: Recurrence Rates



Regardless of how effective African-led operations have proven to be – they are not without challenges. What are some of these challenges?

1.5 African-led Operations Challenges

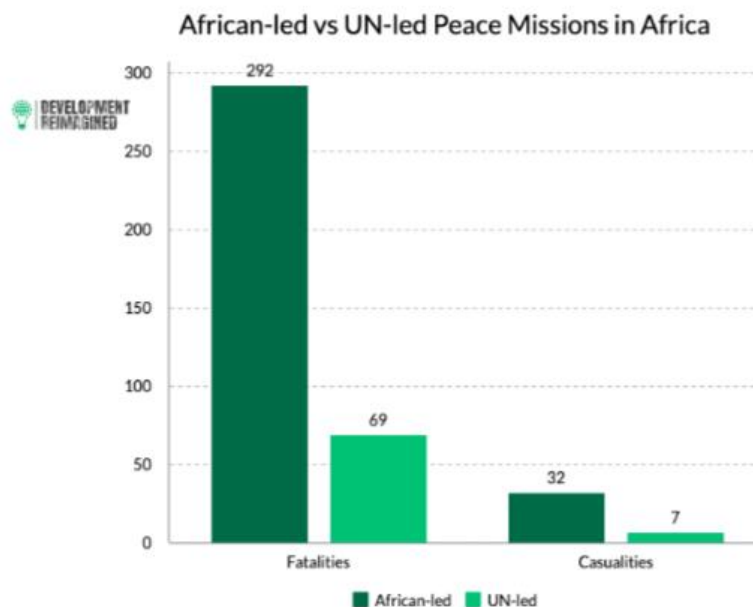
1.5.1 HIGHER CASUALTIES AND MISCONDUCT

As shown in **Figure 9**, UN-led operations tend to report fewer fatalities and casualties; this may be attributed to their principles limiting direct engagement in combat. In contrast, African-led operations display a greater willingness to engage directly, increasing the exposure of troops to combat situations and consequently elevating the chances of fatalities and injuries. In addition to

the high number of fatalities – there have been corruption, sexual abuse and extrajudicial killings of civilians.²³

These incidents suggest that African-led operations must train their personnel on interactions with civilians plus implementing laws with severe punishment on personnel that commit crimes while on duty.

Figure 9: Peacekeeping Operations Fatalities



1.5.2 LIMITED RESOURCES

While the AU and RECs do not disclose their exact budgets - they are believed to operate with significantly smaller financial resources. The AU has the Peace Fund that was created to finance peacekeeping operations on the continent. As of December 2023 – the Fund has raised **US\$ 384.3 million** – slightly below a US\$ 400 million target.²⁴ Only 34 of the 55 African countries have contributed. Considering SAMIM’s withdrawal from Mozambique after three years and with an annual budget of **US\$ 100 million** – the funds in the Fund is only enough to fund SAMIM for the length of its existence. The African Union would have no funds to finance the remaining nine African-led operations.

²³ ibid

²⁴ AU Peace Fund Board of Trustees seek to expand resource mobilization to finance continental peace and security <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240131/au-peace-fund-board-trustees-seek-expand-resource-mobilization-finance>

1.5.3 LACK OF STANDARDISATION AND POLICY UNIFORMITY

The absence of standardisation and policy uniformity among individual Regional Economic Communities (RECs) countries and between the RECs themselves, as well as the lack of a central intelligence center for African countries, RECs, and the African Union during peacekeeping operations, can pose significant challenges. Specifically:

1. **Standardisation and Policy Uniformity:** Standardisation and policy uniformity are crucial for ensuring that all participating entities are aligned in their objectives, strategies, and operational procedures. This uniformity allows for better coordination, reduces potential conflicts or misunderstandings, and enhances the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Without standardisation and policy uniformity, there could be inconsistencies in the implementation of peacekeeping efforts, leading to inefficiencies and potential gaps in operation execution.
2. **Central Intelligence Center:** A central intelligence center serves as a hub for collecting, analysing, and disseminating information relevant to peacekeeping operations. It provides a comprehensive view of the situation on the ground, enabling informed decision-making, efficient resource allocation, and effective response strategies. The absence of such a center can lead to information silos, delayed responses, and suboptimal resource utilisation.

1.5.4 LIMITED FOCUS ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

Due to limited resources, African-led peace operations cannot simultaneously meet the humanitarian needs in their operation zones. In contrast, UN peacekeeping operations work closely with other UN agencies for the protection of civilians during and after conflict. For example, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides expertise for peacekeeping operations²⁵ and the Department of Operational Support (DOS) provides rapid support solutions to plan, mobilise and sustain peacekeeping, special political and other field operations²⁶. African-led operations should ideally do the same especially if/when they get sufficient funding.



PART 2: THE HUMANITARIAN AID LANDSCAPE IN AFRICA

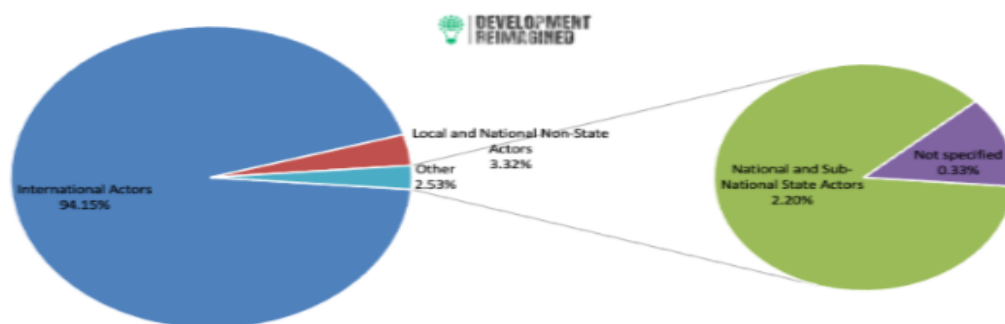
As stated above, African-led peacekeeping operations would ideally be involved in humanitarian aid simultaneously with their peacekeeping work. However, due to lack of funding this tends to be impossible to achieve. That leaves much humanitarian assistance in conflict areas being undertaken by humanitarian-only or development organisations. This raises the question of whether these organisations are “local” or “localised” to any degree or extent.

Today, it is well understood by development players that localised humanitarian aid – and other kinds of localised aid – is more effective because it allows the recipients of aid to determine where and how aid will be directed – based on their needs²⁷. However, putting this into practice in the existing system is a massive challenge.

Thus, over the years, there have been multiple efforts to reform humanitarian aid assistance delivery on the continent and worldwide. The programme that stands out on this is known as the “Grand Bargain” that was signed in 2016 and organised by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) working in collaboration with organisations such as World Vision and International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and donor countries such as Sweden, Canada and Japan. Its aim was and continues to be for each organisation to increase funding of total humanitarian aid to local and national actors to 25% of the annual spend by 2020. However, this did not happen – and has not happened as of the date of this policy brief’s release.²⁸ **Figure 10** compares the funds disbursed internationally vis-a-vis those disbursed to humanitarian aid organisations on the continent.



Figure 10: Share of Humanitarian Aid Received by African Countries in 2023 (By Type of Recipient Organisation)



²⁷ In particular due to the long history of the “aid effectiveness” and “development effectiveness” principle of country ownership, and in the climate finance the practice of “direct access” – for explanations see:

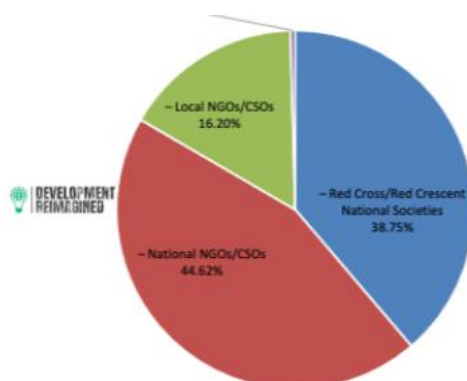
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenessahistory.htm> and <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/02/19/direct-access-accelerating-flow-climate-funds/>

²⁸ The Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream <https://gblocalisation.ifrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Section-2.pdf>

Global data reveals that in 2022, humanitarian aid increased internationally but promotion towards increased funding for local and national actors did not take place. Data also reveals that local and national actors received 1.2% of the total aid - amounting to **US\$ 485 million**. Instead, most of the money was channelled to multinational organisations such as the UN – receiving 61% of the aid totalling **US\$ 22.8 billion** - itself an increase from 2021 that stood at 52%.

In Africa, the picture is even starker. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), international organisations received almost 95% of humanitarian aid flows into the different African countries in 2023. Meanwhile, local and national non-state actors received just 3% of all total humanitarian aid flows into the continent. Of this, and as shown in **Figure 11**, 40% went to local and national NGOs and CSOs in the different African countries.

Figure 10: Distribution of Humanitarian Aid Among Local Organisations in Africa (2023)



2.1 Localisation

Challenges in Africa

The evidence shows that both localisation of humanitarian organisations as well as funding for local humanitarian organisations is low, despite many humanitarian aid organisations working on the continent for well over 25 years. While there are many, multifaceted reasons for this, two in particular stand out.

First, the power dynamics and national interests of high-income countries (HICs) and low-and middle-income countries (LMICs). HICs have turned increasingly towards providing humanitarian aid in recent years, because it is much easier to brand as well as show immediate “results” – for example numbers of people saved or provided refuge for. Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Ukraine, increased by 9% in 2023, reaching **\$20 billion**, with **\$3.2 billion** allocated for humanitarian aid. In the West Bank and Gaza, ODA saw a 12% rise compared to 2022, amounting to **\$1.4 billion** in 2023. Of this total, **\$758 million** was humanitarian aid, marking a 91% increase from 2022.

Globally, humanitarian aid grew by 4.8% in 2023, totalling **\$25.9 billion**. These trends come at a time when many traditional donors find it difficult to persuade their population that sharing public goods – at home and abroad – is in the long-term national interest. In turn, this means recipient

organisations in LMICs are forced to acknowledge funding through branding the donor's logos on their work.²⁹

Additionally, some finances come with strings attached where the recipients are forced to either procure equipment from the donor country, or *not* procure equipment from certain countries (e.g. China) if the aid is from a particular donor (e.g. United States).³⁰ There are also cases of humanitarian assistance being “attached” to certain missions and unable to be used for others, even if the need is there, due to procurement and logistical issues.³¹

There are also multiple case studies, on the other hand, where the main impediment to humanitarian assistance (e.g. grains) is not necessarily availability in the country, but logistics. In such cases, local sources can be wasted while donors ship in their own humanitarian support.³²

A second major reason localisation has been challenging is that foreign donors often have more capital compared to local and national actors. A larger capital budget gives them an advantage of larger organisations, with more capacity and staffing. Increased capital therefore means international organisations can effectively and efficiently respond to humanitarian crisis compared to the local and national actors that do not have as much capacity as international organisations, even if their solutions would be better tailored and impactful in the longer-term.³³

Nevertheless, some international organisations have successfully localised their operations within the continent. One particular **case study** is Oxfam.

In 2006, Oxfam established a liaison office in the AU, recognising the positive role the AU plays in being an agency for change in Africa and the role its citizens and organisations play on the continent.³⁴ The AU was seen as a partner that can provide context expertise and support in Oxfam's own humanitarian aid interventions, building on Oxfam's operational presence in 33 African countries including Sudan, South Sudan, DRC, CAR, Mali and Somalia, as well as its centralised arms Oxfam international and Oxfam Novib.³⁵

Similarly, Oxfam has a collaboration with the AU in DRC and engages with the AU peace and security organs to support its presence in the DRC.³⁶ For instance, Oxfam and the AU together created the “African Union Compendium”, a manual to support training for Oxfam and the African Union.³⁷ In DRC Oxfam not only works with the AU but also works with local actors. Through its

²⁹ A viral post mortem — the aid logo ‘arms race’ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/viral-post-mortem-aid-logo-arms-race-kevin-l-brown/>

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Domestic regulation of international humanitarian relief in disasters and armed conflict: a comparative analysis https://international-review.icrc.org/sites/default/files/irrc_866_7.pdf

³² Challenges and perspectives for humanitarian logistics: a comparative study between the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and the Republic of South Sudan <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JHLSCM-07-2022-0087/full/html>

³³ Africa Humanitarian Response Fund <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/programme/GB-GOV-1-300531/transactions>

³⁴ Oxfam International Liaison Office to the African Union (OI-AU), Oxfam International (2006) <https://www.oxfam.org/en/oxfam-liaison-office-african-union?page=1>

³⁵ Annual Review 2014: Promoting Active Citizenship in the affairs of the African Union, Oxfam International Liaison Office to the African Union (OI-AU), Oxfam International (2014) https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/2014_annual_review_oxfam_liaison_office_to_au_1.pdf

³⁶ African Union Compendium, Oxfam International Liaison Office with the African Union (OI-AU), Oxfam International (2014) https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/african_union_compendium_2nd_edition.pdf

³⁷ *ibid*

Peace Beyond Borders programme – it engages stakeholders in crafting solutions to the challenges they face.³⁸

Empowering local actors and African organisations to take the lead with humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping interventions would create an ecosystem that could quickly and efficiently respond to crisis situations resulting in more strides towards achieving Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063.



REFLECTIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

This policy brief has sought to explain localisation trends of two key aspects of the response to conflict – peacekeeping and humanitarian aid.

This policy brief has shown how peacekeeping in Africa has begun to slowly localise with the continent preferring locally-led operations. For good reason. This policy brief shows that **African-led peacekeeping delivers faster results, can be as much as ten times less expensive than the alternative, and reoccurrence rates are lower.** These kinds of statistics should be shared widely.

Unfortunately, however, funding of locally-led operations, including from international sources, is extremely limited and inconsistent.

So what next? Given the multiple stakeholders in peacekeeping and humanitarian aid on the continent, the following recommendations for the various stakeholders can be made:

3.1 The African Union and RECs

- African countries are showing their preference for localized “African solutions to African problems” when it comes to conflict resolution.
- To back this desire, however, African countries must contribute to the AU Peace Fund as there are currently 34 countries that have made contributions. The AU should impose stricter rules on countries that do not contribute to the Fund.
- The AU and RECs must now play a greater role in humanitarian aid as they have in peacekeeping. It is only through increased discussion and agitation by Africans that the funding and localisation challenges can be resolved. The evidence in this brief showing the benefits of locally-led peacekeeping can contribute and be used to make the case.
- African representatives in the UN should work to ensure the success of African-led interventions is well understood, so the case for African operations to consistently receive funding is made.

3.2 Donors

- While the UNSC helpfully recently announced its plan to fund the African Union’s peacekeeping operations on a case-by-case basis, the reality is that such decisions will also depend on finance. Donors and the UNSC should consistently fund the AU and RECs so that UN-sanctioned localized operations can become a reality.
- Donors still need to find creative ways to prioritise working with local and national actors during humanitarian aid for this to be localised. The slow change so far shows this cannot be left to the market.

3.3 The UN and Humanitarian Aid Organisations

- The evidence in this brief suggests that UN and Humanitarian aid organisations will deliver more successfully if they work with the local actors rather than work individually in a conflict

zone. Creative means of enabling or incentivizing this (e.g. in mission objectives) are crucial to consider.

- Given the AU's and REC's increasing and positive role in peacekeeping on the continent so far, humanitarian aid organisations should begin to work more closely with the AU and RECs so as to align approaches.