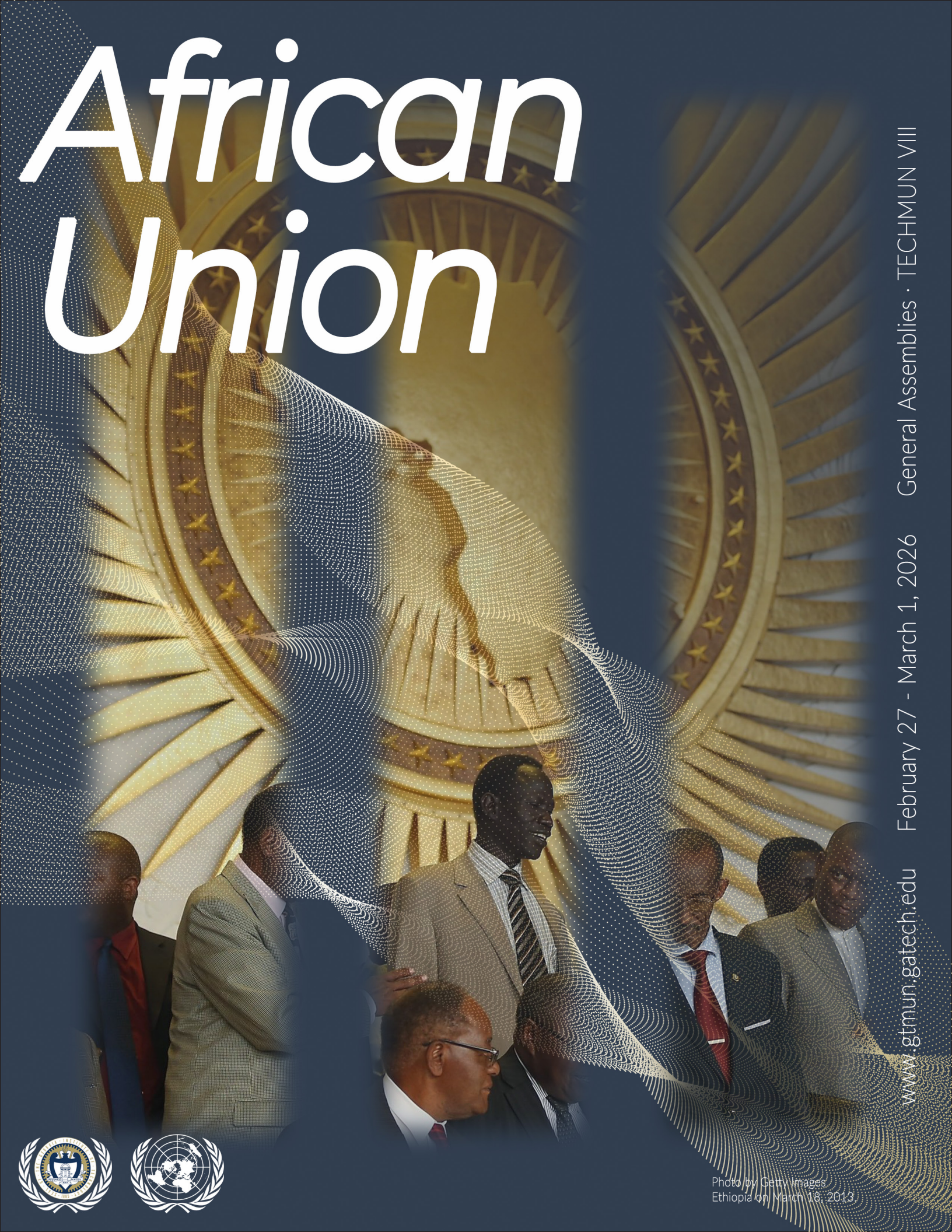
African Union



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Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

Hey guys! My name is Mayla Merhai, and I am so excited and truly honored to be your director for African Union Tech MUN VIII. I am a Computer Science major here at Georgia Tech and I am also pursuing the Law, Science, and Technology minor on the pre law track. This will be my first year participating in the GT Model UN program, but I have been involved in Model United Nations for the past four years, and it has been one of the most meaningful activities I have taken part in. MUN has helped shape how I think about global issues, collaboration, and diplomacy, and I am thrilled to now be on the directing side of things.

Outside of Model United Nations, I stay pretty busy. You can usually find me doing Mock Trial, swimming, working on some side hustle to make money, or picking up a random new hobby that I become obsessed with for about a week. I love trying new things and learning skills just for fun. If anyone knows how to skateboard, please teach me because that is currently at the top of my list.

I am especially excited to see the debate and creativity that comes from the two topics we have prepared for this committee. As a first generation immigrant, these issues are very personal to me. Both of my parents are from Eritrea, a small East African country just above Ethiopia, and through their experiences and stories, I have seen how deeply impactful and relevant these challenges are across the African continent. Because of this, I am really looking forward to hearing your thoughtful, innovative, and diverse solutions, as well as seeing how you work together as representatives of the African Union.

I cannot wait to meet all of you and watch this committee come to life. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions before the conference. I am so excited to work with you all and have an amazing committee together.

Best regards,

Mayla Merhai


ALGERIA
LIBERIA

Committee Introduction

Welcome to the African Union (AU)! As our continent stands at a pivotal time in history, the AU remains guided by its vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." Throughout this committee, delegates will work to implement Agenda 2063, specifically Aspiration 3, which aims for an Africa of good governance and rule of law, and Aspiration 4, which aims for a peaceful and secure continent.

Topic A focuses on Examining Power Dynamics: How to Legitimize Regional Bodies on an International Scale. This topic aims to focus on Aspiration 3 of the Agenda of 2063. For this topic, delegates will consider the relationship between the eight recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with each other and the rest of the world. These bodies serve as essential "building blocks" for the continent's unity. However, recently, the legitimacy of these institutions have been questioned by a sequence of Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG), leading to a suspension of several member states.

Topic B focuses on Expanding Collaborative Efforts to Advance Peacekeeping Across Africa. This topic aims to focus on Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063. This topic examines the change from the traditional policy of "non-interference" to the modern mandate of "non-indifference." This shift allows the AU to take action and intervene in Member states under grave circumstances according to the AU Constitutive Act. Delegates will evaluate the current state and effectiveness of AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOS) and other drivers of modern conflict in Africa.

Ultimately, as representatives of the AU, delegates must find a balance between protecting national sovereignty and achieving continental integration to ensure long-standing peace for all citizens.

Committee Overview

The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of 55 member states that make up the African continent. While the AU is not part of the United Nations, the AU cooperates closely with them, and has a Permanent Observer Mission in the UN.

Brief History: From OAU to AU

The origin of the African Union starts in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The OAU was originally founded by 32 independent African states with the mission of getting rid of colonization and promoting unity in the continent. By the 1990s, the OAU had succeeded in ridding Africa of colonization, however African leaders recognized the pitfalls of the OAU and the need for a new structure to tackle 21st century problems. The African Union was then created specifically to focus on economic development and internal protection of human rights.

Flag of the African Union

Timeline

- **1999:** The Sprite Declaration. In Sri Libya, heads of state called for the establishment of a new union to accelerate integration.
- **2000:** The Constitutive Act. The legal framework of the AU was officially adopted in Lome, Togo
- **2002:** Official Launch. The African Union was officially launched in Durban, South Africa, replacing the OAU.

The main difference from the OAU and the AU is the policies they followed. OAU followed the strict policy of “non-interference”, while the AU adopted the policy of “non-indifference.” This motto of “non-indifference ultimately allowed the AU to intervene under grave circumstances

Disclaimer

Model United Nations provides an opportunity for delegates to engage diplomatically with topics of global importance and explore possibilities for conflict resolution in a meaningful way. Many of the topics at hand may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter. We ask delegates to be respectful and professional when engaging with their committee and communicating with fellow delegates and TechMUN Conference staff. The content warning below is meant to warn you of potentially controversial topics that are present in the content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of the committee (e.g. debate, speeches, directives), so that you can prepare yourself before reading this background guide and participating in the committee.

At TechMUN, we take equity violations very seriously and require delegates to fully comply with our equity guidelines. Failure to do so will result in an immediate disqualification from awards, and you may be asked to leave the conference. Please remain respectful in committee, and avoid overgeneralizations as well as take into account individual differences and contexts during your speeches. If you have any questions regarding our equity guidelines, we encourage you to review our extended conference policy located on our website and/or contact one of our staff members.

If, because of this committee's content warning, you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to our staff via email at techmunconference@gmail.com.

Topic 1

How to Legitimize Regional Bodies on an International Scale

Importance of Legitimization

Legitimacy is a core foundation for the African Union's "African solutions to African problems" mandate. It shows the degree to which Member states, as well as international partners recognize the AU's authority and ability to lead. When this legitimacy is weak, a "legitimacy gap" is created, leading to political instability and increased external interference. This gap is particularly prevalent in the areas of political participation and financial independence. As of 2026, over 10% of the AU Member States are currently suspended due to military coups, and more than 60% of the Union's budget is still provided by external donors (Amani Africa, 2025; Policy Center, 2025). This heavy reliance on foreign funding and the sidelining of many nations prevents the AU from acting truly independent.

Regional organizations are usually the most effective mediators because they have local expertise and direct interest in regional stability. However, when the AU's legitimacy erodes, Member States often disregard and bypass regional frameworks. An example of this is the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) by Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, meant to rival the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) bloc. In order for the African Union to maintain its usefulness, the AU must bridge this gap by enforcing rules constantly across all members and securing financial autonomy without outside influence.

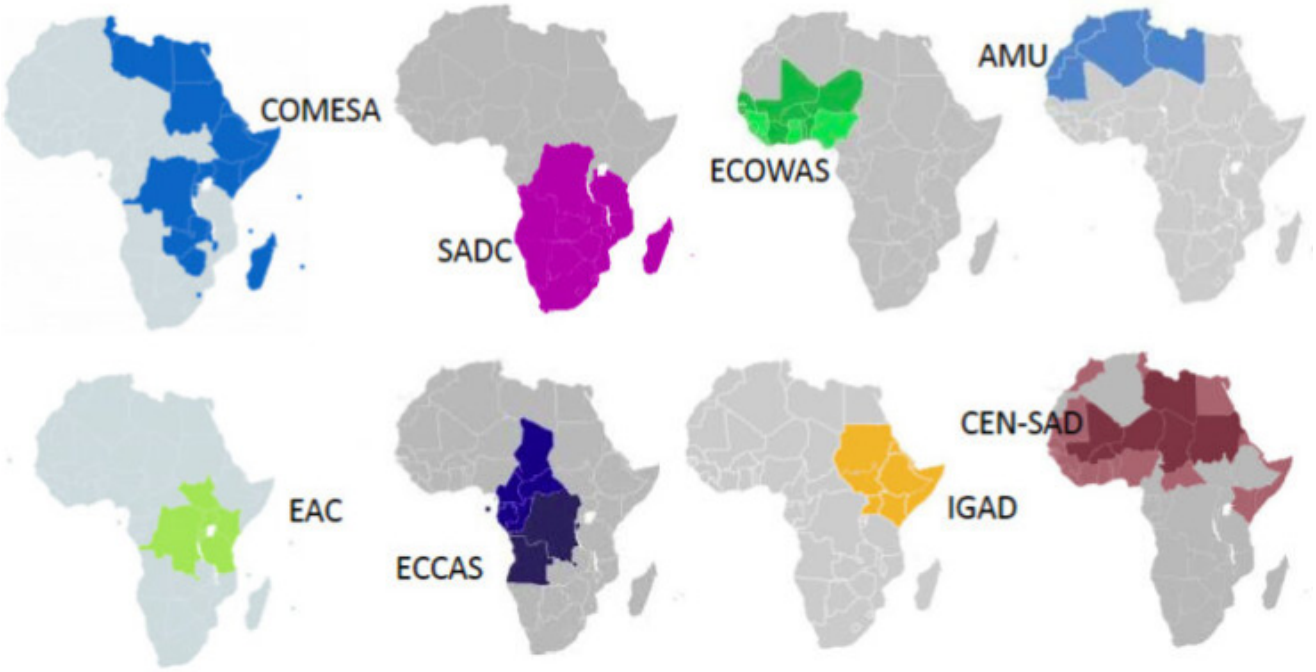
Background

The Building Blocks: Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

To understand the dynamics within the African Union, you first must understand the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The Regional Economic Communities are associations of African States designed to facilitate regional economic integrations among member countries within the broader African Economic Community. The AU does not operate as a large body, but rather through a decentralized framework. This is where the RECs serve as primary "building blocks" for continental integration.

Historically, these RECs formed independently. Each bloc was created to solve

specific local issues such as post colonial trade barriers or sub regional security threats. This officially changed with the 1991 Abuja Treaty, which changed the focus of these blocs to a "United Africa." This treaty designated the RECs as the mandatory "building blocks" for the future of Africa. Despite this, the relationships did not change much and stayed informal for nearly two decades. This unorganized nature often led to overlapping mandates and confusion over who held authority during a crisis.



REC FTAs are building block of the AfCFTA

The RECs started to become coordinated with the 2008 Protocol on Relations between AU and RECS. This agreement established a formal "division of labor," ensuring sub-regional policies aligned with overall continental goals of Agenda 2063. Today, there are eight recognized RECs that serve as an essential connection between individual national sovereignty and the overall goal of unity:

- **Arab Maghreb Union (UMA):** Established in 1989 to foster unity among five North African states with shared cultural and linguistic ties
- **Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA):** Established in 1981; Now the largest trade framework in the continent, with 21 member states
- **Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD):** Established in 1998 with focus on the unique security and environmental challenges of the Sahel-Saharan region.

- **East African Community (EAC):** Re-established in 2000; Currently the most integrated REC, with plans for a single currency and political federation
- **Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS):** Established in 1983 to promote regional cooperation in Central Africa
- **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):** Established in 1975; Has evolved from a trade bloc to a primary enforcer of democratic norms and regional security
- **Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):** Established in 1986; originally created to combat drought and desertification in the horn of Africa; now plays main roles in peace negotiations
- **Southern African Development Community (SADC):** Evolved from the "Frontline States that opposed apartheid; Now focuses on socioeconomic integration and security in Southern Africa

The APSA Framework: African Peace and Security

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the main structure used by the African Union to manage and prevent conflicts. It was established after the 20002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of Peace and Security Council, shifting the doctrine from "non-interference" to "non-indifference."

APSA relies on five pillars to coordinate with the RECs to execute mission, maintain coordination and preserve stability:

1. **The Peace and Security Council (PSC):** The central decision-making organ for conflict resolution
2. **The Panel of the Wise (PoW):** A group of five highly respected African personalities who provide "preventative diplomacy" and meditation.
3. **The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS):** A data-driven system made to predict and signal potential conflicts before they escalate
4. **The African Standby Force (ASF):** Cross Functional teams (military, police and civilian) on standby in their countries ready for rapid deployment.
5. **The Peace Fund:** The financial structure supposed to provide the AU with resources necessary for peacekeeping missions.

The Legitimacy Gap

The "Legitimacy Gap" is the divide between the African Union's legal authority (what it is supposed to do on paper) and its actual influence (what it can practically achieve). This gap exists at three levels: between the AU and international bodies, between the AU and its own Member States, and between the AU and African citizens. When this legitimacy is weak, a "legitimacy gap" forms, leading to political instability and increased external influence. This gap is most prevalent in two areas: political participation and financial independence. As of 2026, over 10% of AU Member states are currently suspended due to military coups (Aboagye). Additionally, more than 60% of the Union's program budget is still provided by external donors (Pharatlhathe 4). This heavy reliance on foreign funding and the sidelining of many countries stops the AU from acting as a truly independent and authoritative voice in the space of international bodies.

The "Silencing the Guns in Africa" initiative is a large project of the AU Agenda 2063 aimed to end all wars, conflicts and gender-based violence, while preventing genocide across the continent (United Nations). This initiative will not be possible if legitimacy is not established within the AU. Regional organizations, such as the AU, are often the most effective mediators because they have local expertise and direct interest in regional stability. However, when AU's legitimacy erodes, Member States often skip past regional frameworks. A clear example of this is the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) by Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. This alliance was made as a rival bloc to ECOWAS (Dersso). These types of rivalry blocs work against the African Union's ultimate goal of a more unified Afirca.

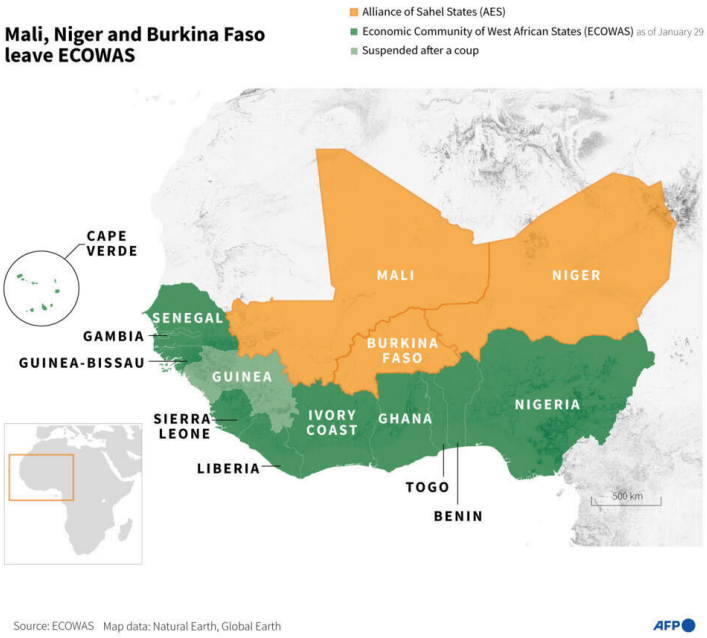
It is imperative that the AU bridge the legitimacy gap by enforcing democratic rules consistently across all members and securing financial independence without outside influence.

Case studies

Case Study 1: ECOWAS and the "Coup Belt" in the Sahel

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has long been recognized as the "gold standard" for regional integration, however this title is being challenged. After military takeovers in Mali (2020/21) ,Burkina Faso

(2022) , and Niger (2023), the block attempted to enforce democratic expectations through heavy economic sanctions (Hutagalung). However, these measures significantly backfired; in Niger, for instance, the cost of a daily nutritious diet skyrocketed to 110% higher than the local minimum wage, fueling a massive loss of popular legitimacy for the bloc (Resnick). By 2024, these three nations announced their total withdrawal from ECOWAS to form the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). These 3 countries represented 16% of ECOWAS's population (approximately 71 million people) and 7% of its GDP, ultimately having a large negative impact on the regional bloc and its legitimacy (Aboagye).



By 2026, this split has become more than a short-term conflict and has moved to become structural reality. The AES formalized as a Confederation in 2024 and launched their own biometric passports in January of 2025 in order to bypass ECOWAS travel regulations. This split also crippled regional trade. Nigeria alone reported a 13% drop in non-oil exports to the region in 2025 due to the disruption of established trade agreements (Aina). With the Sahelian states turning towards Russia for security and cutting military ties with the Western hemisphere, ECOWAS is left with a major hole in its security and a diminished voice on the global stage.

Case Study 2: The EAC in the DRC - A Conflict of Mandates

In order to understand why regional interventions in the AU struggle, we must first define a "mandate". In the context of the African Union, a mandate is the mission's official "job description." It controls what soldiers are authorized to do and when they are allowed to use force. Generally, these fall into two main categories. Peacekeeping is when soldiers act as a neutral buffer to maintain a ceasefire. Peace Enforcement is more offensive and focused on actively hunting and neutralizing threats. When a "mandate mismatch" occurs, meaning the host country and the intervening force have different ideas about a mission's purpose, the results can be chaotic and dangerous.

The current crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a primary example of this "mismatch". In 2022, the East African Community Regional Force (EACRF) deployed about 12,000 soldiers to stabilize North Kivu. However, the mission only lasted one year. The DRC government had expected the offensive force to destroy M23 rebels, while the EACRF followed a peacekeeping mandate that focused on creating a buffer in zones and encouraging discussion. This rudimentary disagreement led to a total breakdown in trust, leading the DRC to officially expel the force in December of 2023 (Sabala and Muhindo 15–16).

After the exit of East African troops, the DRC invited the SADC Mission (SAMIDRC), expecting a more aggressive enforcement approach. The issue with this mission was a massive $500 million annual funding gap, which significantly crippled the mission. Due to these financial constraints, SADC was only able to deploy 1,300 of its targeted 5,000 troops (Dzinesa and Rusero). The lack of troops and resources left the region vulnerable. In January 2025, the situation reached a breaking point, the "Sake Massacre" when M23 rebels utilized advanced military technology to overrun the SAMIDRC base. The M23 rebels captured the major cities of Goma and Bukavu and the battle led to the death of 14 South African peacekeepers and signaled the total failure of the mission (Wolters).

People fleeing from fighting in North Kivu

The humanitarian toll of these failed mandates is overwhelming. The number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the DRC has surged past 6.7 million, with millions of civilians living in insecure camps without basic necessities (UNHCR). These series of failed missions forced the AU to hold an emergency summit in late 202 to debate a shift from "competitive regionalism", where different blocs try to solve the same problem separately, toward a Joint EAC-SADC military force. The goal for 2026 is to create a unified AU mandate that can provide a well-funded response to modern conflicts.

Directives / QARMAs

What methods can Member States implement to achieve financial autonomy to ensure the AU maintains independent decision-making?
How can the African Union ensure that sanctions effectively promote democratic restoration without alienating Member States or causing civilian harm?
How should labor be divided between AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in order to prevent overlapping mandates?
How can the AU balance the principle of national sovereignty with needs to prevent “constitutional coups”
What strategies can be used to bridge the “citizen gap”, ensuring that AU policies and regional interventions are viewed as legitimate by the African public?
How can the AU ensure consistent enforcement of its democratic protocols across all eight recognized RECs to prevent “forum shopping”?

Topic 2

Expanding Collaborative Efforts to Advance Peacekeeping Across Africa

Key Terms and Acronyms

African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)	Structure related to the prevention and management of crises, conflicts, post-conflict resolution, and continental development.
African Standby Force (ASF)	Established in 2003 as a standby capacity with personnel from member states to prevent and respond to crises in the five regions of Africa: north, east, central, west, and south (Tchie and Ani 2).
Constitutive Act of the AU	Gives member states the right to intervent for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.
Non-Indifference	AU principle that the continent cannot be passive to atrocities committed in neighboring countries (Ndubuisi Christian Ani 2).
Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)	Include both non-state actors and terrorist groups that exist outside formal state control that use violence to achieve political, ideological, or financial goals.
Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD)	Responds to Peace Support Operations (PSOs) to coordinate policies, guidelines, agreements, and frameworks that promote regional peace.
UN Security Council Resolution 2719	Allowed up to 75% of AU led peace support operations to be funded through the UN.

Introduction

The pursuit of peace is integral to the African continent's goals for security, development, and global economic integration. According to an Al Jazeera report, as of November 2025, the African continent hosts roughly "40% of the world's wars and armed conflicts" (Africa Grapples with Over 50 Active Conflicts). With more than 50 armed conflicts across the region, this violence has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives and the displacement of more than 45 million people (Center for Preventive Action). The motivations behind conflict are broad, ranging from resource accumulation to economic disparity to identity, requiring a unified, comprehensive effort from the continent's regional body. Since the 2002 transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union, Africa's traditional policy of "non-interference" has shifted to one of "non-indifference" under the AU constitutive Act. This commitment to non-indifference, which allows the AU to intervene in a member state for cases of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, underscores the need for collaborative peacekeeping efforts.

Relevant Peace/Conflict/AU Effort / Timeline

2002	African Union is established as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity
2003	African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB)
2004	AMIB transition to UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB)
2004	AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) established to negotiate ceasefire in Darfur
2007	AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) established in Somalia
2007	AMIS is transitioned to UNAMID, the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
2011	South Sudan becomes an independent nation
2013	African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) is launched in Mali but soon transitioned into UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)

2020	AU's "Silencing the Guns" initiative, which aims to end all wars, civil conflicts, gender based violence, and violent conflict extended to 2030
2023	Sudanese Civil War
2023	UN Security Council passes Resolution 2719, committed UN assistance to AU-led peace operations
2024	ATMIS, the AU Transition Mission in Somalia shifts security responsibilities to Somalia National Forces
2025	AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) established

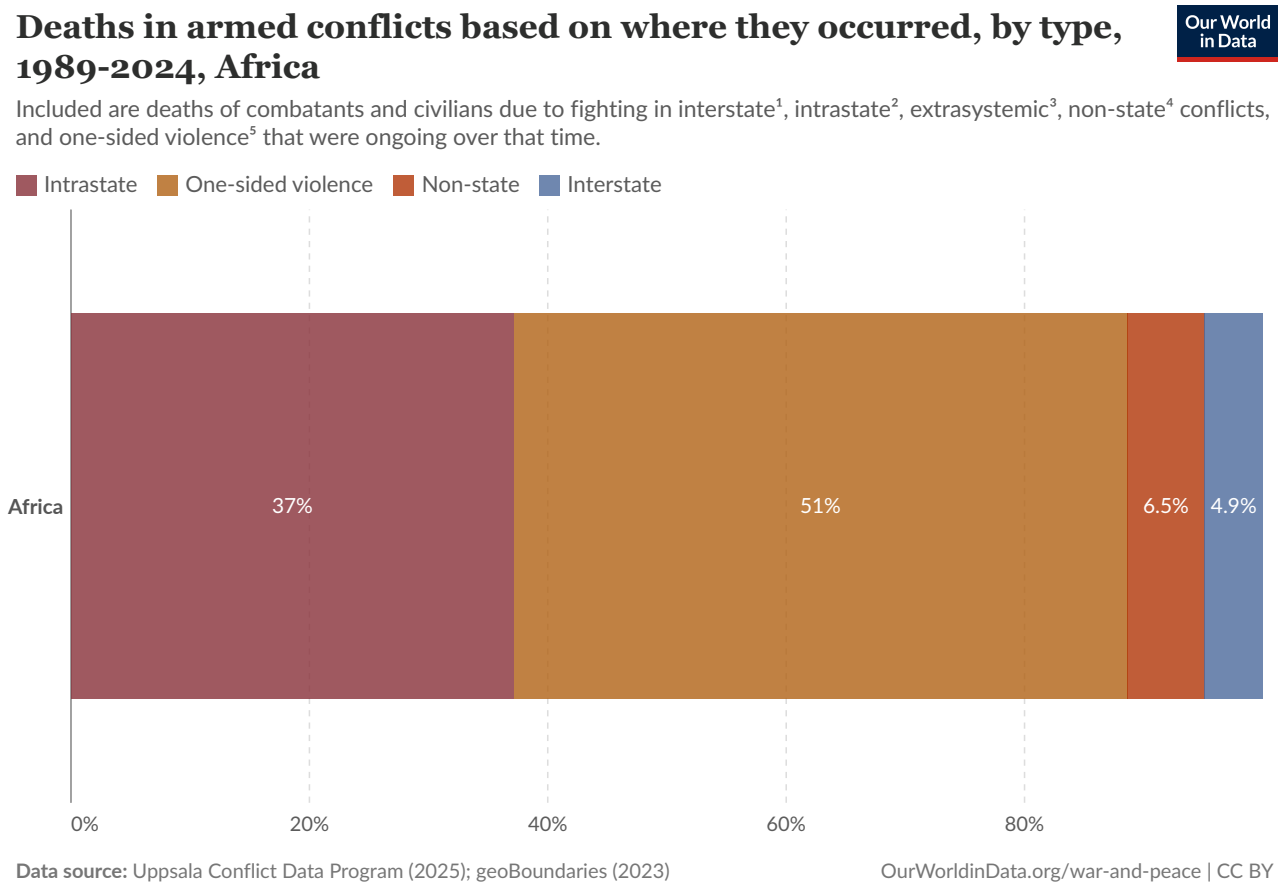
Enduring Impacts of the Colonial Era

The threats to Africa's security landscape have been shaped by socioeconomic inequality and ethnic fragmentation, leading to outbreaks of violent conflict throughout the region. To fully address these challenges, it is necessary to understand the lasting impacts of colonialism on the continent, particularly the construction of arbitrary borders imposed following the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. By dividing the continent with no regard to preexisting cultural, ethnic, or linguistic identities, colonial powers set the stage for modern identity conflicts and secessionist movements across the continent.

Beyond arbitrary physical borders, colonial powers often institutionalized division, particularly through the "divide and rule" strategy, which systematically separated social and cultural groups to prevent unity in the colony. A key example of this is Belgium and Rwanda, in which Belgium encouraged tensions between the Hutu ethnic majority and the Tutsi minority. Ultimately, these tensions culminated in the Rwandan genocide of 1994, resulting in the deaths of 800,000 civilians, primarily from the Tutsi population (Kulik).

Economic Motivators for Conflict

In recent years and with the rapid progression of climate change, there has been an increase in resource driven competition and conflict within Africa. In these instances, state and/or nonstate actors seek resource accumulation for the purposes of gaining profit and maintaining power over a particular territory. Recent studies cite resource accumulation as a critical component of the conflict in Sudan, which, since April 2023 has resulted in state collapse and sexual and ethnic



violence in the country. As one of the largest global producers of gold, controlling the gold mining industry has been a key objective of both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Further, studies show that global producers of gold tend to "experience more conflict than non-producing regions" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation). Considering the abundance of natural resources in Africa, the escalation of resource competition has exacerbated violence and highlighted state weakness, threatening peace throughout the region.

Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs)

Modern conflict in Africa has shifted away from fights between two clearly defined armies. Instead, the presence of armed non-state actors like militias, terrorist organizations, and insurgents has increased dramatically. These groups organize and exercise violent attacks while being independent of formal state institutions. With motivations ranging from ideology to power, NSAGs tend to hold significant authority in their respective regions, controlling territory, "exercising governance, [and] exerting some form of control over civilians" (Petrini, "Non-State Armed Groups and Today's Intractability of Conflict" 26). In some cases, NSAGs are the singular source of resources for a particular territory, providing security and/

or justice systems and replacing the role of the state. These groups are deeply entrenched in their respective territories, and, as such, strategies for addressing them are critical in future collaborative peacekeeping efforts.

AU Peacekeeping Framework

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the main mechanism for the promotion of peace and prevention of conflict throughout the continent. This framework is rooted in the idea of "non-indifference" to war crimes and genocide across the continent, granting the AU the power to intervene in member states in these severe cases. The core of APSA is the Peace and Security Council (PSC) which exists as the main decision making body and is supported by the African Standby Force (ASF). The ASF is composed of trained standby forces from Africa's five regions, translating to "roughly 25,000 personnel... who remain in the host countries until they are called on to deploy" (Tchie and Ani 2).

Since its establishment, the AU has conducted nearly 40 Peace Support Operations (PSOs), notably in Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, and Mali (Petrini, "Peacekeeping in Africa"). The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is one of the longest and largest AU led peacekeeping operations. Beginning in 2007, AMISOM was established to support the transitional government in Somalia and protect infrastructure. However, the mission has continued to the present day, now in collaboration with the United Nations. AU PSOs have been largely successful, demonstrating the AU's "capacity to conduct large-scale, multidimensional operations in hostile environments" (Alghali 24). Further, the AU's support in Somalia showed a commitment to long-term peace enforcement.

However, peacekeeping operations continue to face issues with limited funding. The AU is largely dependent on financing from external donors, with former AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, stating that "70% of the 650 million annual budget of the AU is funded by foreigners" (Dersso). Similarly, peace operations are primarily funded by international partners, with the UN recently committing to funding up to 75% of PSOs on a case by case basis. When considering the future of peacekeeping across the continent, it is critical to assess the importance on international actors and funding gaps within the AU.

Peacekeeping forces in Africa (Petrini, "Peacekeeping in Africa")

Current Developments

In December 2023, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2719, solidifying a partnership between the AU and the UN. The resolution highlights a new mechanism for financing AU peace operations, prioritizing the need for collective action in peacekeeping. The resolution created a hybrid funding mechanism for peace operations, permitting up to 75% of costs to be covered by the UN with the AU funding the remaining 25%. In the year following the resolution's adoption, the AU and UN collaborated to prepare for the implementation of the

program, creating a joint roadmap focused on "planning, decision making, and reporting; mission support; financing and budgeting; and compliance" (Tadesse). However, in the two years since its adoption, Resolution 2719 has yet to be fully implemented. Analysts highlight decreasing financial contributions to the UNSC, US retreat, and the general financial constraints of the UN as reasons for the delay (Haile and Yohannes). With the future of this resolution uncertain, African leaders must navigate the harsh funding landscape in their efforts for peace.

Directives / QARMAs

How should the AU negotiate and/or interact with non-state actors that hold significant territorial control?
How should the AU confront the financial challenges of the UN when coordinating peacekeeping efforts?
How can the AU integrate local leaders into mediation processes to ensure peace agreements are respected by communities under NSAG control?
How should the AU respond to regional blocs such as AES that pursue security strategies outside of AU and REC frameworks?
To what extent should AU peace operations incorporate long term state building and reconciliation efforts in post colonial conflict settings?
How can the AU ensure operational integrity and neutrality when host-state governments attempt to influence troop composition based on political rivalries?

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