Chapter 15

The Quest for Peace in Africa: Convergence and Fragmentation within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

Ndubuisi Christian Ani
Senior Scholar in Residence,
US Institute of Peace (USIP), Nigeria
christian-ani@outlook.com

Introduction

Over the past three years, the African continent has been faced with a coup crisis driven by a renewed citizen demand for democratic dividends. Many of the coups in West Africa – specifically in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso – are driven by widespread discontent over state ineptitude in the face of rising violent extremism, farmer-herder conflict, secessionist agitations, the COVID-19 pandemic, and environmental disasters that have claimed lives and displaced many. The political and security landscape is complicated by a rise in global power competition leading to the involvement of new security partners such as the Wagner mercenaries, while European partners have been forced to draw down or withdraw their forces in certain regions such as the Sahel. The evolving security situation calls into question the proactiveness and efficacy of the African security alliance in the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

APSA, composed of the African Union (AU), regional economic communities (RECs), and regional mechanisms (RMs), has enhanced African agency in peace and security since the early 2000s. This is unlike the era of the Organisation of African Unity

(OAU), where much of the conflict response on the continent was dependent on the disposition of the United Nations (UN) and global powers such as the United States (US), France, and the United Kingdom (UK). The grand alliance envisaged in the context of APSA is rooted in the ideals of Pan-Africanism. The ideals are etched in the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty of 1991, the AU Constitutive Act of 2002, the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol of 2003, as well as the 2008 memorandum of understanding between the AU and the sub-regional organisations. While APSA remains a game changer in the African security response, the normative and co-operation gaps and rivalries between the AU and RECs/RMs undermine the effectiveness of APSA and threaten to fracture the alliance.

The co-operation gap between APSA partners is among the reasons why the AU initiated a reform process in 2017 to enhance the efficiency of the AU and to efficiently co-ordinate Africa's response to avoid duplicity and wastage of resources (Kagame 2017). The reform process, which is led by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda calls for "a clear division of labour and effective collaboration among the AU, RECs/RMs, the Member States, and other continental institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity" (AU Assembly 2017). The AU reform decision further established a yearly co-ordination meeting between the AU, RECs, and RMs in replacement of the AU mid-year assembly meeting.

One of the major dynamics that brought about the need for the division of labour between APSA partners is the increased levels of engagement by sub-regional organisations in crisis response, while the role of AU in both mediation and peace support operations declined. When the AU was formed in 2002, it initiated several peace initiatives in member states, including Burundi, the Comoro Islands, Sudan, and Somalia between 2003 and 2007. In 2013 and 2014, the AU also took over missions initiated by sub-regional organisations in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR). Currently, sub-regions are relying on their capacities to lead peace initiatives in their respective regions, as evident in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, as well as in South Sudan, The Gambia, Lesotho, and Guinea Bissau.

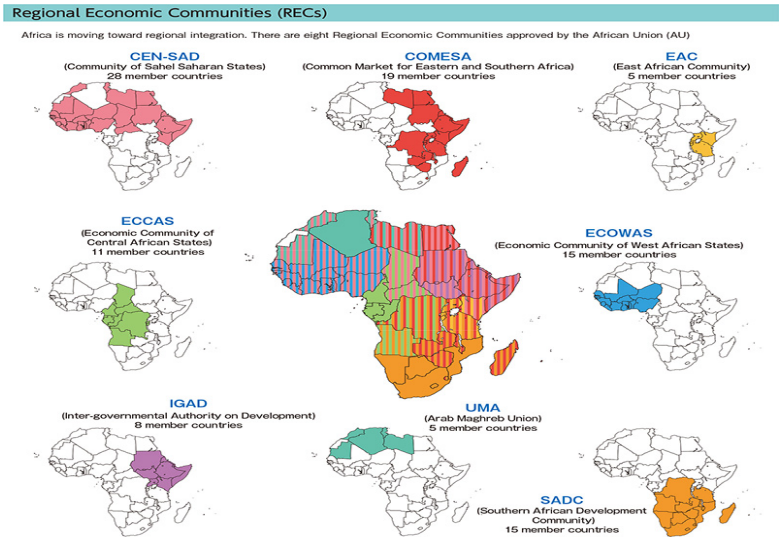
The AU now leads the mission in Somalia, while playing a support role to RECs/RMs in some crises. While these are in line with the principle of subsidiarity, some sub-regional initiatives – such as the G5 Sahel Initiative and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram – diverge from the AU's oversight and primacy (Mutisi 2018). The quest for greater autonomy in intervention is shown by stronger RECs, such as the missions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Guinea Bissau and The Gambia, as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in countries like Lesotho and Mozambique. RECs are increasingly showing a preference for subsidiarity while recommending that the AU plays a role in norm setting and resource mobilisation (AU PSD 2010; PSC Report 2017). The situation raises concerns over the extent to which subsidiarity could be applied, the future role and primacy of the AU, and APSA's ideal of maximising resources and capacities within the continent. Moreover, there remains poor guidance on how to provide checks and balances, especially when sub-regional roles become part of a problem (Nathan 2017).

This chapter therefore discusses the key drivers of coalition and fragmentation within APSA, to enhance understanding of APSA's working methods and identify areas of improvement. The analysis derives from an extensive review of primary and secondary literature on APSA institutions. The author also conducted interviews with officials working with the AU in Addis Ababa, the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, and the SADC in Botswana, as well as virtual consultations with think tanks working in the APSA context. These interviews were conducted between October 2022 and March 2023 with support from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The chapter provides an overview of APSA's symbiotic co-operation framework. This is then followed by an analysis of the dilemma involved in the coexistence of the principle of subsidiarity and the AU's primacy. The chapter further examines the nature of the AU's comparative advantage in contexts with weak RECs. This is followed by a section on co-ordination between the AU and RECs, as well as the implication of co-ordination gaps amongst RECs.

APSA's Co-operation Framework

As shown in Figure 15.1, APSA is a multistakeholder co-operation framework involving the AU and eight RECs, as well as other regional mechanisms in the African continent.

Figure 15.1: An Overview of APSA Institutions in Africa



Source: Afriwonk (2018)

Given the multiple APSA actors with independent identities, one of the less understood aspects of APSA is the extent to which these independent organisations are interwoven and accountable to each other. Some analysts observe that the legal documents of sub-regions are independent and do not subscribe to an AU oversight (Suzuki 2022:174). While sub-regional organisations are independently established, they were created based on recommendations from discussions and decisions by the OAU for a gradual integration from the sub-regional level before a broader integration (AEC Treaty 1991). The agreed Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 and the African Economic Community (AEC) treaty in 1991 called for the enhancement of RECs and their formations where they do not exist, to foster a bottom-up approach for continent-

wide integration. Africa's integration agenda is driven by the constructed ideals[1] of Pan-African unity and solidarity among African states (Nkurumah 1970).

Pioneer RECs such as ECOWAS, formed in 1975, and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established in 1983 – along with all the RECs except for the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) – recognised the co-ordinating and central role of the OAU/AU in the Pan-African integration agenda in their respective treaties. As such, inter-African co-operation at various levels were deliberate, with sub-regional institutions designed as part of the continental process (OAU 2000).

In 2002, the OAU was formally transformed into the AU to address the gaps in the latter, especially around peace and security where the OAU was hamstrung, leading to unco-ordinated responses by both African and external actors. The AU was equipped with normative and institutional mandates to spearhead the provision of African solutions for peace and security (AU Assembly 2013). Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act stipulates that the AU has the right "to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" as well as a serious threat to legitimate order. With a two-thirds majority, the AU Assembly could authorise intervention in its member states, contrary to the complete consensus that characterised the OAU epoch. Article 4(j) also bestows the right of member states to request intervention to restore peace and security.

Equally, RECs held intervention responsibilities even before the establishment of the AU. Notably, ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD have been prominent in peace initiatives in their respective regions since the 1990s.[2] As such, while acclaiming its

1 In line with constructivism, this shows how prevailing ideas amongst African states and people play a key role in shaping identities and practices. See Hurd, I. (2008). "Constructivism". In Reus-Smit, C. & Snidal, D. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2 This includes ECOWAS intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s as well as SADC's regular intervention in Lesotho. IGAD

primacy for peace and security in Africa in line with article 16 of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol, the AU recognised the integral role of RECs by integrating them as building blocks of the AU's APSA strategy. RECs are required to intervene in crises in their respective member states in line with Article 20 of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the AU and RECs/RMs. This is highlighted in Table 15.1, below. When RECs intervene, they are expected to keep the AU fully informed regularly and ensure that their activities are in line with the objectives of the AU PSC protocol.

Table 15.1: Key Protocols and MOUs Guiding APSA Relationships

Protocol/MOU	**Key Objectives**
Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (PSC Protocol) of 2003	The AU PSC serves as the primary referent body for the "collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa" (AU PSC Protocol 2002: art. 2). Article 16 of the PSC Protocol affirms that "Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa". The members of sub-regional organisations are represented in the AU PSC's 15 member states which represent the five regions of Africa.

continues to play a key role in addressing the security threats in Somalia and South Sudan.

Protocol/MOU	Key Objectives
Protocol on Relations between the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities (RECs) of 2008	The objective of the protocol is: Article 5 of the protocol requires members to review their treaties to strengthen their organic link with the AU. Article 5(b) of the protocol also charges RECs to align "their programmes, policies, and strategies with those of the AU" (AU-RECs Protocol 2008). The protocol also requires the AU to monitor the progress of the RECs and support their effort to realise the objectives of the AEC treaty in line with Article 11. Article 22 of the protocol also enables the AU to sanction RECs whose policies and measures are incompatible with the objectives of the AEC Treaty.
Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Co-ordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa of 2008. (AU-RECs/RMs MoU)	The objective of the MOU is: The objective of the MOU is to promote closer co-operation, partnership, exchange of information, harmonisation, and co-ordination between RECs and the AU specifically on peace and security issues. Article 4.4 highlights "the adherence of subsidiarity, complementarity, and comparative advantage, to optimize the partnership between the Union, the RECs and the Co-ordinating Mechanisms in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability". Article 4 outlines that the MOU is guided by the "recognition of, and respect for, the primary responsibility of the Union in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, following Article 16 of the PSC Protocol". The AU Commission bears responsibility for keeping the UNSC in the loop of all interventions by AU, RECs, and mechanisms.

The idea behind the APSA alliance under the co-ordination of the AU is that security threats would be addressed by the collective strength and capacities within the African continent (AU CADSP 2004). As shown in Figure 15.2, APSA institutions engage through various mechanisms for intervention.

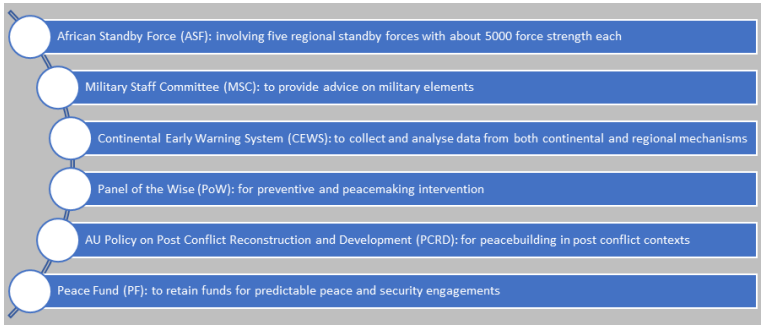


Figure 15.2: APSA's Mechanisms for Intervention

RECs have consistently served as the anchor for AU's leverage and response in affected member states. As such, the AU PSC has consistently endorsed and mirrored decisions taken at the sub-regional level. It follows a sequence of sub-regional decisions before the AU meeting and endorsement of the RECs' decisions. For instance, during the recent upsurge in the coup situation in West Africa, the AU PSC met to adopt the decisions taken at the ECOWAS level, while also suspending the membership of the affected countriesin line with the decision of ECOWAS. Additionally, the AU PSC, composed of 15 member states based on equitable representation of the five regions in Africa, is designed to ensure that PSC members reflect the insights and perspectives of their regions in PSC debates. However, the institutional co-operation between the AU and RECs is marked by the following key areas of convergence and divergence.

The Principle of Subsidiarity vs AU's Primacy

The existing framework of co-operation envisaged among APSA institutions promotes co-operation but leaves room for ambiguities. Throughout the 2008 MOU between the AU and the RECs/RMs, the terms "work together", "co-operate", "combine their efforts", and "collaborate" were used to describe the rules of engagement for APSA. These wordings were motivated by the assumption that African states are united in solidarity and could easily navigate through situations by reaching 'common' positions.

However, in APSA's legal framework, there is no specification of which APSA institution should respond first or address specific types or stages of conflict, thereby creating room for tensions and hesitancy. The principles of subsidiarity, comparative advantage, and complementarity were only mentioned once in the MOU, without a description of what they mean operationally. This creates a lacuna on the extent to which sub-regions could intervene without backstopping and guidance from the AU.[3]

Interviews with ECOWAS and SADC officials show that there is growing evidence to suggest that in situations where a strong REC exists, there tends to be a lesser commitment to the AU's leadership. An example of the AU and RECs' conflicting views of subsidiarity and primacy played out in Mali in 2012. When the Tuareg rebel groups, along with jihadist allies, began their insurgency in Mali in 2012, ECOWAS planned to deploy a regional force following the meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council on 12 April 2012 (Reliefweb 2012). This was supported by the AU, and the continental body advised ECOWAS to seek the UN Security Council authorisation for the mission (AU 2012). The approval was granted by the UN Security Council in December 2012 (UNSC 2012).

However, building on the precedent of being responsible for deploying large-scale missions between 2003-2012 and in line with Article 16 of the PSC Protocol, the AU took on the responsibility for the mission with ECOWAS as its key partner. The AU appointed President Pierre Buyoya as the special representative and head of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) on 30 January 2013 (AU PSC 2013). While the co-operation could be termed as a mark of scaling up within APSA, the situation led to ECOWAS' discontent over the AU's usurpation of the mission lead role. While commenting on the Mali crisis in 2012, a respondent from the ECOWAS commission narrates that, "ECOWAS established the mission as MISMA. The task of the AU was to support the intervention. But the AU was

3 The principle of subsidiarity devolves responsibility to local actors who are closer and able to respond to a crisis situation, as opposed to those further away from the crisis. See Djilo and Handy, 2022.

not seeing it in that way. What we saw is that while ECOWAS was in the field, AU was preparing to deploy AFISMA. When the AU came attaching its role under the umbrella of the UN, we were not really happy with that".[4]Another respondent from the ECOWAS commission maintains that,

> There are certain principles that are important. ECOWAS is not a subsidiary or lower organisation to the AU. ECOWAS is a partner of the AU. But there seems to be an impression that subregions are an appendix of the AU. The unhealthy rivalry is not helping, and the MoU needs to be revised to show that RECs are the first responders and if they are not able to address the situation.[5]

The quest for autonomy in intervention is not specific to ECOWAS. While commenting on the question of specific roles, a respondent from the SADC region explains that, "in line with the subsidiarity principle, RECs should implement their mandate independently. The AU should not interfere in any peace and security matters in a sub-region unless requested to do so by an REC or if/when the situation endangers the lives of the civilian population, and the REC is unable to intervene".[6]

An AU official sees this differently, noting that AFSMA "was designed to foster joint and collective action in respect to Article 16 of the PSC Protocol. The AU should be able to intervene when multiple partners are involved in the crisis context."[7] AFISMA involved troops mainly from ECOWAS member states and Chad, which belonged to ECCAS. The AU also led the funding conference[8] for AFISMA in 2013 at the sidelines of the AU summit. There

4 Interview, ECOWAS Commission, 11 November 2022.
5 Interview, AU Commission, 1 February 2023.
6 Interview, SADC Commission, 1 March 2023.
7 Interview, AU Commission, 2 February 2023.
8 Most often, the approval of the AU is required for external parties such as the EU to provide funds to sub-regions. This was customary under the EU's African Peace Facility (APF), which is now subsumed under the European Peace Facility (EPF). The EPF, established in 2021, does not require strict AU endorsement for support to sub-regional organisations in Africa. Increasingly, there are concerns about whether sub-regions will actually seek the approval of the AU if they can internally source the funding.

is no doubt that the tension created by the AFISMA situation continues to affect the response strategy in Mali. Recently, the security situation in Mali has deteriorated while the military junta insisted on the withdrawal of French forces and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Yet, neither AU nor ECOWAS has engaged the other on potential joint response or support to stabilise Mali. The AU has virtually stayed out of the ongoing challenges in Mali, while ECOWAS's legitimacy in the country has waned following the regional sanctions over the military coup.

The challenge of subsidiarity and primacy is not specific to APSA. The relations between the UN and AU often face challenges over the principle of subsidiarity as implied by Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The irony at the level of APSA is that, while the AU advocates for subsidiarity in its relations with the UN, it is reluctant to adhere to this principle about RECs (Nathan 2017). However, it is important to note that the relationship between the AU and RECs is more deeply symbiotic than UN and AU relations. The AU PSC members agreed at their October 2018 retreat to respect a subsidiarity approach that allows the AU to take over implementation when RECs/RMs have exhausted their efforts and if they do not act swiftly to resolve a crisis (ISS 2018). However, it is not clear who determines when RECs/RMs have exhausted their efforts and if RECs are willing to allow the AU to intervene.

'Functional Subsidiarity' and the Comparative Advantage of the AU

While subsidiarity implies the capacity of the lower levels to respond to crisis situations, the term 'functional subsidiarity' serves to emphasise that lower levels could lose their 'jurisdiction' to respond to crisis situations when they are unable or unwilling to respond to crises (ISS PSC 2019). RECs are expected to anticipate and address security threats, but their capacity for meaningful response varies. In contexts where weaker RECs exist, the AU has effectively stepped up and responded to the crises in partnership

These funding dynamics shed some light on the role of external actors in the con-joints and disjoints in APSA.

with the affected RECs, reflecting "scaling up dynamics" (Coe & Nash 2020).

In the CAR, the AU and ECCAS have taken turns in addressing crises. When violence broke out in the CAR in 2012, for example, the AU took over ECCAS's Multinational Force in the CAR (FOMUC) and transformed it into the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in 2013 to stabilise the country. Subsequently, the AU led the African mediation effort in the country along with ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and other partners within a framework known as the AU-led African Initiative (AU PSC Report 2020). While commenting on the inherent checks and balances within the subsidiarity principle of the 2008 MOU, a respondent from the AU argues that,

> In the case of the CAR, for instance, ECCAS started but they did not have the capacity to complete the mission, then the AU took over and afterwards, the UN took over following complications in the AU mission. Hence, interventions are incrementalist from the sub-region, then continental and international. As such, the involvement of all the parties from the get-go is crucial for lasting peace.[9]

Nevertheless, the AU-led mediation is yet to lead to stability in CAR. Rather, the CAR government is increasingly relying on Russia and its Wagner forces to sustain its leadership.

The situation in Libya also shows that the AU could play a significant role where weak RECs exist but to a limited extent because it relies on RECs to anchor its interventions. When conflict erupted in Libya in 2011, the AU was keen on intervening in the crisis, but it lacked relevant influence on the ground due to the weakness and non-existence of the AMU. The weakness of the AU and the absence of a strong REC led to the intervention of the UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The AU continues to struggle to find relevance in the peace process before and after the killing of President Muammar Gaddafi by NATO-backed local forces. Since 2016, the AU has been making rhetoric

9 Interview, AU Commission, 31 January 2023.

about initiating a national dialogue to foster the resolution of the conflict between the warring parties in Libya (1SS 2018; AU PSC Communique on Libya Feb 2023). However, it has been unable to do so due to a lack of leverage on the ground. France and the UN have brokered several deals with the warring parties.

Co-ordination between RECs and the AU

Members of RECs are represented at the AU PSC. However, there has been limited co-ordination between the AU and RECs at an institutional level when conflicts emerge. Several decisions from PSC retreats since 2007 recommended joint consultations between the AU PSC and similar bodies at the REC level. Yet, these decisions have not been implemented (PSC Secretariat 2018). It is often taken for granted that the cross-memberships between the AU and RECs foster harmonisation. Yet, the interests of APSA actors are continually shifting and could be conflicting, as shown by the fallout between the AU and ECOWAS over the conflict response in Mali in 2012. Interaction between the AU and RECs (as institutions) only occurs when the head of the AU Commission or the RECs are invited to each other's summits or the PSC sessions. The PSC rather engages more often with the UNSC and the EU Political and Security Council than it does with its REC partners.

The introduction of the Mid-Year Co-ordination between the AU and RECs in replacement of the second AU assembly meeting is a landmark step in terms of harmonising AU-RECs relations. This co-ordination must also be reflected in the context of AU PSC engagement with similar organs to prevent contradictory perspectives on conflict resolution. While differing perspectives are common in international relations, public disagreements debilitate the efficiency of APSA's conflict resolution. In the CAR, for instance, ECCAS and the AU had conflicting standpoints when Francois Bozize was deposed in March 2013 by the Seleka forces. When Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia took power, the AU suspended the CAR, in line with the African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance (ACDEG), and imposed a travel ban on the junta on 25 March 2013. However, ECCAS recognised Djotodia as the new president and refused to implement the AU's sanctions. This was somehow linked with

ECCAS's disagreement with the AU's perceived dominance (Coe & Nash 2020). At the 2022 AU 9th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, members of the AU PSC agreed to have "fact-finding missions and extensive consultations with RECs/RMs prior to the imposition of sanctions against any AU Member State" to secure buy-in and effectiveness (AU High-Level Seminar 2022). In recent years, there has been a concerted effort by the AU to harmonise its decisions with those of RECs via sequencing of decisions.

Inter-REC Co-operation and Rise of Ad Hoc Coalitions

Among the RECs/RMs that make up APSA, there are rarely any joint mediation or peace support operations, despite some notable co-operations in economic areas (PSC Secretariat 2018). This has led to member states cherry-picking which REC attends to its issues while others form *ad hoc* mechanisms when none of the RECs address their interests. The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) shows how the fluidity of member states' interests leads to poor co-ordination among RECs. The DRC, which geographically belongs to ECCAS, joined SADC in 1998. Subsequently, SADC played a key role in peace operations in the DRC, including its deployment to an Intervention Brigade with about 1 000 forces in 2013, in parallel with the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Recently, however, the DRC joined the EAC and advocated for a mission to fight the M23 rebels, which has been perpetuating a reign of terror in the country. The EAC approved the deployment of its regional force to the DRC[10] – however, this was not conceived in co-ordination with SADC.

When the EAC forces arrived in the DRC and were reluctant to engage the M23 rebels, the DRC threatened to terminate the EAC mission due to inefficiency (The Independent 2023). It therefore resorted to SADC's assistance. On 8 May 2023, SADC approved the deployment of additional troops to respond to the threats in the DRC. It is uncertain whether the EAC will remain on the ground

10 Rwanda, which belongs to the EAC, is against military engagement with the M23, which it is accused of backing. Rwanda rather favours negotiations with the rebels.

when SADC deploys, and there is less clarity on how they will co-operate amid an ongoing call for co-ordination among them. In any case, there will remain a challenge in co-ordinating the forces on the ground.

The AU has an opportunity to co-ordinate the interventions of these RECs or manage the deployments via the broad ASF framework. However, the AU has taken a backseat in the ongoing security threat in the DRC, given the scourge of half-hearted measures when multiple actors are involved in a crisis. Weakness and half-heartedness is also evident in Cameroon where the UN, AU, and ECCAS are non-responsive and shifting the responsibility to intervene to one another. This reluctance is more evident in the context of cross-regional security threats leading to the formation of *ad hoc* coalitions to circumvent the bureaucracy of the traditional AU and RECs configuration. For instance, the G5 Sahel force (comprising Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) was established in 2017 to address the threat of violent extremism following the delays of the AU-led Nouakchott Process in establishing a force. The conflict and threats of terror specifically affects the G5 – Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger (which belongs to ECOWAS), Chad (which belongs to ECCAS), and Mauritania (which pulled out of ECOWAS in 2000 but remains a member of the non-functioning AMU).

Initially, the AU had initiated the Nouakchott Process for the enhancement of security co-operation and the operationalisation of APSA in the Sahel-Saharan region (AU PSC 2015). Eleven countries – Algeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Chad – were part of the so-called Nouakchott Process. However, because other members of the process were not directly affected by the crises, they were reluctant to commit to the mission. This motivated the affected countries of the G5 Sahel[11] to establish the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel in February 2017, comprising up to 5 000 personnel to address the security threats. The AU is currently exploring options to establish a special unit for counter-terrorism within the ASF

11 In 2014, the G5 Sahel was established to foster economic co-operation and security in the Sahelian region.

framework to address the gaps that have led to the formation of *ad hoc* arrangements (AU PSC Report 2020).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed some of the critical areas of convergence and fragmentation within APSA. APSA partners are deeply interlinked by Africa's integration agenda, which is rooted in Pan-Africanism. However, normative gaps and limited co-ordination attenuate APSA's efficiency. Firstly, APSA's legal frameworks do not provide operational guidance on the coexistence of subsidiarity and the AU's primacy. This has led to the AU and RECs engaging in rivalry over who leads or has the final say in a conflict situation. Funding and resource decisions also play a role in APSA convergence and divergence. When funding for peace operations is linked to APSA hierarchies, APSA institutions tend to converge through the AU, although the continental bureaucracies could limit swift response. When funding arrangements are individually administered, stronger RECs seek greater autonomy from the AU backstop and oversight.

Additionally, the AU tends to hold some comparative advantage in context with weaker RECs such as in the CAR, while the AU's role in Libya is constrained due to the lack of an active REC to anchor its interventions. Lastly, co-ordination gaps are at the heart of APSA's divergence. APSA institutions barely meet at the institutional level on issues relating to peace and security. Rather, the AU PSC relies on briefings by the representatives of the RECs within the PSC. There must be regular institutional retreats between the AU and RECs. This includes holding joint PSC meetings with similar organs at the REC level to promote shared understanding and effective response. Such co-ordination should also play out between RECs on cross-regional security threats. Poor co-ordination between RECs has led to the emergence of *ad hoc* mechanisms that fragment APSA's capacities and call into question the ideals of solidarity within APSA.

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