

# A landmark UN resolution on the financing of AU-Led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) faces uncertain reception in Addis Ababa

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On Thursday 21 December 2023, the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) adopted the landmark resolution 2719 (2023) on the financing of African Union (AU) Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

While understandably much of the attention in New York has been on the long dragged and protracted negotiation over the Gaza resolution, the adoption of resolution 2719(2023) constitutes a major milestone in AU-UN partnership on peace and security.

Indeed, the resolution has been hailed as a major breakthrough by many members of the UNSC, [seizing the new momentum](#) that arose in 2023. The AU Commission Chairperson, who supported the proposed amendment by the US, welcomed 'the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2719(2023)' calling it 'a historic development' in his X platform.

Yet, there may not be as much enthusiastic reception from AU's standing decision-making body, the Peace and Security Council (PSC).

The draft that was put in blue for voting by the UNSC was drafted by the African three elected members of the UNSC (A3), under the coordination of Ghana. However, the final version of the resolution adopted on Thursday included an amendment that was introduced by the US on burden sharing. While the A3 abstained from the proposed amendment by the US, the amendment capping access to UN assessed contribution to 75% garnered the number of positive votes required for its inclusion in the final draft. It was thus interesting that the final amended resolution received unanimous support, including from the A3 who initially did not vote affirmatively for the amendment.

As [reported](#) ahead of the adoption of the resolution, the negotiations leading up to 21 December were 'long and apparently contentious.' It was in November that the A3 shared the initial draft with other members of the UNSC. Following input from members of the UNSC, the A3 made significant changes to the initial draft.

The negotiation on the resolution started after the decision of PSC authorizing the A3 to restart the negotiation on the resolution in a [12 May 2023 communique](#). Not surprisingly, there was expectation that the A3 would keep the PSC in the loop during the course of the negotiation.

After the A3 initiated the draft and started engaging the other members of the UNSC, members of the PSC had the first opportunity to engage in the process only in early December. When the draft was shared and discussed on 7 December, members of the PSC indicated that they were not clear on how far they could go in commenting on and proposing amendments to the draft given that the document was circulated to other members of the UNSC for their input before the PSC engaged in the document.

The next time members of the PSC were engaged was during the [Oran process of the high-level ministerial seminar on peace and security in Africa](#) on 18 December 2023. A major aspect of the engagement was on the issue of burden sharing and the US proposal capping access to UN assessed contributions to 75% with the remaining balance to be mobilized from various sources in addition to the AU. PSC members were told that the Chairperson of the Commission supports the proposed amendment.

Considering the misgiving of many members of the PSC about the process and their concern about the various policy and practical implications of specifying the percentage of access to UN assessed contributions, it came as no surprise for some keen observers that the majority of members of the PSC did not support the proposed amendment during the Oran meeting. Instead, they decided to refer the matter to the AU Assembly scheduled to be held in February 2024.

Despite this position by the PSC, the plan for considering the resolution for adoption remained unchanged. It was reported that the AU Commission Chairperson made last minute attempt to secure support from the PSC by trying to convene a summit level PSC meeting, although he failed to secure the convening of the meeting.

On the day the draft resolution was scheduled to be considered for a vote by the UNSC, the PSC was not brought on board. The resolution was adopted, supported by the A3, with the amendment by the US.

The sense of lack of adequate engagement of the PSC during the negotiation on the draft and most importantly how the process unfolded at the end in the face of a clear PSC position, is certain to sour relations between the PSC and the A3, and even between the PSC and the AU Commission. One can foresee that this would also affect the PSC's consideration of the manual on coordination between the AU PSC and the A3 endorsed with amendments during the Oran meeting for adoption by the PSC.

Apart from its possible emergence as a major issue during the next Oran meeting in December 2024, how this would affect other engagements will be seen in the coming months and during 2024.

Despite the unfortunate and possibly avoidable procedural glitches that damped the mood and the reception of the adoption of the resolution, there is little doubt that the significance of this resolution remains profound.

Certainly, what this resolution means in practical terms would become clear in the months to come. Yet, no doubt that it stands to transform the nature of the AU-UN partnership on peace and security in substantial ways.

First, it is anticipated that access to UN assessed contributions would no longer be as ad hoc as it used to be. While access to UN-assessed contributions would be decided on a case-by-case basis, once the UNSC authorises the deployment of an AU mission under Chapter 7, that mission would benefit for the duration of the mandate set by the UNSC from UN-assessed contribution.

Second and perhaps beyond the financial dimension of the issue, this resolution stands to change the way the AU and the UN interact prior to, during and after a decision on deployment of UNSC authorized AU-led PSO is adopted. This would necessitate enhancement of the institutional arrangements and the level, frequency and nature of interactions between the AU and the UN.

Strategically speaking, this resolution would also transform the nature of the UN's engagement on the continent including in terms of the use of peacekeeping. In expanding the tools at the disposal of the UN, it avails an opportunity for navigating the current challenging geopolitical environment both globally and in Africa. However, it is doubtful that this would mark the end of UN peacekeeping in Africa as some fear

considering that the current circumstances unfavourable to UN peacekeeping could change in the future.

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