



Mandating and transition of peace support operations: Lessons from recent experiences

Peace support operations are among the key instruments of international and regional organizations for the management and resolution of conflicts. The African Union (AU) as the continental body, with a robust mandate for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, has deployed peace support operations in various conflict settings as part of the effort to contain and facilitate the resolution of conflict. Since the deployment of AU Mission to Burundi (AMIB) in 2003, the AU authorized or mandated the deployment of about a dozen peace support operations.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) is the AU organ responsible for mandating peace support operations, whether in the context of a new mission, or in the context of a transitional mission with an overall aim of achieving peace and security on the Continent. These missions are principally temporary in nature, with an inevitable transitional phase which ideally would occur when the mission has achieved its objectives, including - most importantly - enabling national institutions to assume their respective responsibilities; or would occur as a response to a change of the dynamics of the theater of operations and/or in the institutional context of its establishment, thus necessitating its change or reconfiguration with a new mandate suitable for the assumed transition.

Recently, the joint United Nations and African Union Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) transitioned into the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). Similarly, in March this year, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is reconfigured into the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Additionally, the AU PSC endorsed the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF).

Against the background of these recent experiences, the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Amani Africa Media and Research Services (Amani Africa) are jointly organizing at the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security a panel discussion on the mandating process of AU peace support operations, with a focus on PSOs in transition phases.

The panel discussion seeks to raise and address the following and related questions:

What are the approaches for a successful mission transition? What processes should be followed in conceptualizing, planning, designing and implementing transitions? What are the factors that need to be factored in regarding the timing of mission transition? What are the actors whose voice should be taken onboard in planning and implementing mission transitions? How best should the AU plan inclusive and transparent engagement and negotiation with such actors? What are the lessons from recent experiences of mission transitions such as the transition from AMISOM to ATMIS in this respect?

The Panel Discussion is expected to take place at the AU Commission.