Sustaining Peace in Africa: Strengthening Peacemaking and Peace Operations for Conflict Resolution and Post-conflict Recovery

Sixth AU Awareness Month on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 | 9:30 am – 12:30 pm EAT

AU Commission (AUC) Headquarters PSC Chamber, Julius Nyerere Building | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Workshop organized by the African Union (AU), International Peace Institute (IPI), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), and Amani Africa

BACKGROUND

Leveraging the peace continuum, encompassing interconnected efforts ranging from conflict prevention and management to post-conflict reconstruction and development, is central to the African Union's (AU) pursuit of durable and sustainable peace. This approach is envisaged in the AU's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), and a broader body of AU norms and policies. The AU's engagement, including through its collaboration with the regional economic communities (RECs) and the United Nations, has been anchored in these normative frameworks, tools, and practical experiences.

Protracted and increasingly regionalized conflicts, coupled with shifting geopolitical dynamics, are placing significant strain on existing tools for peacekeeping, peacemaking, and conflict resolution. At the same time, international and regional multilateral institutions face growing challenges related to their credibility, legitimacy, leverage, and operations. These factors, among others, have constrained their ability to lead responses to evolving crises and to effectively deploy the full range of instruments at their disposal. From preventive diplomacy to mediation and peace support operations, multilateral actors are finding it increasingly difficult to shape both processes and outcomes of peace efforts.

The growing reliance on bilateral and ad hoc arrangements by some states to fill security vacuums risks further fragmenting continental peace and security frameworks. It could also weaken the role of multilateral institutions, which bring extensive expertise, institutional experience, and established normative frameworks to conflict prevention and management. In the peacemaking sphere, the use of minilateral forums is not new, but their increased prominence in recent years has, in some contexts, displaced established multilateral mechanisms, including Africa-led institutions and frameworks. These developments underscore the need to better understand how African actors and multilateral institutions can adapt their political approaches to effectively respond to conflicts.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

To take stock of these efforts, challenges, and opportunities, this event will bring together officials from the AU, UN, regional economic communities, regional mechanisms (RMs), and member states, as well as other experts, to examine a broad spectrum of peace and security responses. It will provide an opportunity to reflect on ongoing policy shifts in Addis Ababa and New York as well as across the continent and their implications for partnerships in conflict prevention, resolution, and management. By linking these conversations, the event will explore how global and regional tools can be reimagined to effectively respond to contemporary conflicts in Africa.

SESSION 1: AFRICAN PEACEMAKING EFFORTS IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Peacemaking efforts, conflict prevention, mediation, reconciliation, and political dialogue have to be put at the center to deter conflicts and to respond effectively to build sustainable peace. The peacemaking landscape has become increasingly fragmented, with multiple parallel initiatives led by individual states, regional actors, and external powers often operating with limited coordination. While this diversity of actors can create additional avenues for dialogue, competing mediation tracks have also contributed to forum shopping by conflict parties, inconsistent diplomatic incentives, and the erosion of the leverage and centrality of multilateral institutions. At the same time, the growing reliance of conflict parties on military solutions has further weakened incentives for negotiation. Together, these dynamics risk creating diplomatic stalemates and undermining the coherence and effectiveness of efforts to resolve Africa's contemporary conflicts.

In addition, peacemaking initiatives have become entangled in broader geopolitical rivalries, with competing external interests at times diverting attention away from the core objective of resolving conflicts. The situations in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo illustrate the growing complexity of contemporary mediation efforts, particularly the proliferation of parallel tracks operating simultaneously. Multiple mediation tracks are not necessarily new; mediators have long engaged a wide range of actors and stakeholders to build support for peace processes. However, the current context warrants closer examination of who leads these initiatives, what African ownership looks like, and how different actors provide support, particularly where parallel efforts appear to be competing rather than complementary. This moment marks an important shift from earlier periods when African actors and institutions played a central role in peace processes, often working in partnership with international actors.

Objective

This session aims to explore how African mediation efforts can be recalibrated to respond to the current geopolitical environment and the emergence of new actors in conflict diplomacy. It will examine how African institutions, particularly the AU and Regional Economic Communities, have navigated and can better navigate geopolitical competition, including through strengthened cooperation with the UN.

Guiding Questions

Changing dynamics are affecting peacemaking.

1. How can multilateral institutions, particularly the AU and subregional organizations, adapt to a changing peacemaking environment?
2. What steps can be taken to strengthen coordination and coherence among multiple mediation tracks in complex conflicts?
3. How can African-led mediation and diplomacy be revitalised to enhance legitimacy, ownership, and effectiveness in conflict resolution?
4. How can the AU–UN partnership be better leveraged to support peacemaking efforts in Africa?
5. What role can the three African members (A3) play in the Security Council to ensure that African-led peacemaking efforts are better integrated in the Council's conflict prevention and resolution toolkit?

6. How can the AU PCRD policy and related AU frameworks for peacemaking, peace support operations, and peacebuilding be used to advance durable peace in Africa?

SESSION 2: AU–UN PARTNERSHIP IN A SHIFTING PEACE OPERATION LANDSCAPE

The AU and the UN have a longstanding partnership on peace operations, with various types of deployments across the continent. Over the past decade and a half, however, the pace of new missions led by either organization has slowed. As a result, a growing number of coalitions and operations led by subregional organizations has emerged.

Coalitions and subregional operations, while often viewed as more agile and capable of rapid deployment, have encountered significant political, operational, and logistical challenges affecting their sustainability. At the same time, contingency measures introduced in response to the UN liquidity crisis are having direct implications for Africa, where the majority of UN peacekeeping missions are deployed. The AU mission in Somalia also continues to face serious constraints in accessing sustainable and predictable funding. With the growing emphasis on mission transition and drawdown, it is important to consider how these processes can help redirect efforts toward other forms of engagement, particularly longer-term peacebuilding.

These challenges also reflect deeper political shifts in how peace operations are perceived, supported, and prioritized by international and regional actors. These developments point to broader realignments in the ways different actors respond to insecurity and manage conflicts.

Objective

Drawing on ongoing processes in Addis Ababa and New York, including the secretary-general's review on the future of peace operations, the review of the African peace, security, and governance frameworks, the memorandum of understanding between the AU and RECs/RMs on the use of the African Standby Force (ASF), and the implementation of the strategic review of the ASF, this session aims to go beyond financial considerations to examine how coordination and cooperation between the AU, subregional organizations, and the UN are being reshaped in an evolving multilateral landscape. It will explore how the AU, subregional organizations, and the UN can adapt their partnership to current political and operational contexts in responding to conflicts.

Guiding Questions

1. How is the current political and financial context reshaping UN peacekeeping operations in Africa and the AU–UN partnership?
2. Beyond UN Security Council Resolution 2719, what new or existing areas of cooperation can be developed between the AU, RECs/RMs, and the UN?
3. How can peace operations in Africa be adapted to remain effective in protecting civilians and responding to increasingly complex conflict environments?
4. How can the A3 be better positioned to strengthen linkages between AU-led initiatives and the Security Council's policy directions on peace operations?

AGENDA

Programme Moderator: Emmaculate Asige Liaga, Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

08:30-09:30 **Registration**

09:30–09:45 **Opening Remarks**

Representative of the African Union Commission, TBC.

Ms. Signe Gilen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway to the African Union

09:45–11:05 **Session 1: African Peacemaking Efforts in a Changing Landscape**

Ambassador Jevin Pillay, Permanent Representative of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to the AU

Netsanent Tekeda Alemu, Coordinator of the Panel of the Wise Secretariat, Mediation and Dialogue Division, PAPS, AUC

Jonny Hogg, Counsellor, Peace & Conflict, Folke Bernadotte Academy, FBA

Jenna Russo, Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, IPI

Tefesehet Hailu, Senior Researcher, Amani Africa

Moderator: Dr. Emmaculate Asige Liaga, Researcher, ISS

11:10 –12:25 **Session 2: AU–UN Partnership in a Shifting Peace Operation Landscape**

Ambassador Mouktar Osman Karie, African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM)

H.E. Rebecca Amuge Otengo, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Uganda

Colonel (rtd) Nurudeen Azeez, Acting Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service, UNOAU

Dr. Andrew E.Yaw Tchie, Senior Fellow, NUPI, TfP Coordinator (***Virtually***)

Moderator: Dr. Dawit Yohannes, Senior Researcher, ISS

12:25–12:30 **Closing Remarks**

Jenna Russo, Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute