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REGIONAL AGENCY AND HYBRIDISATION IN AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING: REVISITING THE CASES OF AMIS AND UNAMID IN SUDAN

Abstract:

The aim of this article is twofold. On the one hand, the article revisits peacekeeping in the Sudan as a case relating to a greater desire for African agency in regional security governance captured in the notion of African solutions to African problems. On the other hand, it explores the need and importance of hybridisation in security governance and the quest for strengthened partnerships between peacekeeping actors on the African continent and the international community at large. In view of the above, the first focus area or case study under review is the establishment of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), a first ever for the African Union (AU) which was launched in accordance with a decision of the AU in 2004 after negotiations among the warring factions under the auspices of the AU. The second focus area concerns the creation of the UN/African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007 as a hybrid UN–AU operation to bring stability in the war-torn Darfur region of Sudan where the AU was falling short. Specifically, an assessment and appraisal is made of the first three years of UNAMID deployment (2007–2010).

Keywords:

African agency, African peacekeeping, hybrid peacekeeping, Sudan, African Union, UNAMID

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Hopes were high for the success of this all-African operation, the first ever by the A.U., created in 2004².

Introduction

The establishment of the UN/African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was certainly one of the most significant peacekeeping operations in the field of security co-operation and hybrid arrangements in the post-Cold War era involving combinations of both regional and global powers – specifically the UN and the African Union (AU). To put this in perspective: on 31st October 2007, the United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary-General for peacekeeping, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, put this in context when he stated that the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations had initiated a major reform of the support aspects of peacekeeping, and had begun mounting “two new, highly unique and complex operations” in the Darfur region of Sudan and Chad/Central African Republic (CAR) respectively.

Guéhenno explained that these two operations (Darfur and Chad/CAR) would be deployed over extended supply lines stretching almost to the central parts of Africa in inhospitable terrain and that nowhere were the risks more apparent than in Darfur. The operation in Darfur – the UNAMID – “carried the greatest risk in the past 10 years of peacekeeping and it was imperative that the United Nations rose collectively to meet the challenges, or it would fail”³. As far as Chad/CAR was concerned, Guéhenno further indicated that the UN Mission in the CAR and Chad (MINURCAT) would be deployed in close concert with the European Union (EU). On 15 March 2009 the UN took control of the military component of MINURCAT, thereby replacing the EU-led operation whose year-long mandate expired on this date. Both these operations, he stressed, called for intensive collaboration between partner organisations and would thus be very challenging⁴.

The establishment of UNAMID was also significant for another reason. In 2005, two years before the establishment of UNAMID, one of the key actors in the Darfur conflict, former South African President Thabo Mbeki, claimed that Africa had not “asked for anybody outside of the African continent to deploy

² Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change*, 19.01.2006. <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/sudan0106/sudan0106web.pdf>, 3> (22.11.2017).

³ *Momentous year for United Nations peacekeeping as it mounts two unique operations in Africa, sustains 18 more, restructures department, Fourth Committee told. Report by the UN Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping to the UN General Assembly*, United Nations Department of Public Information, GA/SPD/382, New York, 31.10.2007, <www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gaspd382.doc.htm> (20.11.2017).

⁴ *Ibidem*.

troops in Darfur. It's an African responsibility and we can do it"⁵. This represented a clear aspiration by the AU to become involved in attempting to mediate the Darfur crisis. The continental organisation accordingly created the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) with a view to moving towards greater African agency in regional security governance. Indeed, in the words of David Mickler, Darfur was "a good opportunity for the AU to put its money where its mouth is", but it soon transpired that the AU was ill equipped institutionally and under-resourced for the political and military challenges in Darfur⁶.

The aim of this article is, firstly, to revisit peacekeeping in Sudan as a case relating to a greater desire for African agency in regional security governance as captured in the notion of African solutions to African problems. Secondly, the article aims to explore the importance of hybridisation in security governance and the need for strengthened partnerships between peacekeeping actors on the African continent and the international community at large. Two focus areas or case studies are under review. The first focus area is the establishment of AMIS while the second focus area concerns the creation of UNAMID in 2007. Specifically, an assessment and appraisal is made of the first three years of UNAMID deployment (2007–2010).

This article is situated in the scholarly field of peace and conflict studies as it attends to peacekeeping institutions and processes that can facilitate or lead to a more desirable human condition. In this regard, the notion of hybridisation – as a form of (better) security co-operation – is of special interest. The article is also situated in the field of military strategy which relates to the quest for a balance between the political level (*ends*) and the military level (*means* and *ways*) in Darfur. After all, strategy implies a harmonious balance between the political objectives (*ends*), assessment of the economy of force (*means*), and the considerations on the application of force (*ways*). Put differently, strategy is fundamentally about the ways in which military power is applied or used to achieve political objectives⁷. That being said, political demands on the one hand and implementation constraints on the other have always been at the centre of challenges relating to a better balancing of ends and means in post-Cold War African peacekeeping operations.

Background: Towards African agency in peacekeeping

Since the UN forces experienced a setback in 1993 in Somalia, it became apparent that the UN was no longer prepared to contemplate complex

⁵ D. Mickler, *UNAMID: A hybrid solution to a human security problem in Darfur?*, "Conflict, Security and Development" 2013, Vol. 13, No. 5, p. 494.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 492-494.

⁷ H. Edström, D. Gyllensporre, *Political aspirations and perils of security: Unpacking the military strategy of the United Nations*, Basingstoke, 2013, p. 2.

intervention operations that might require the use of force – especially on the African continent. This reality was reflected in the declining number of UN peacekeepers globally. At the same time, the decline in the number of UN peacekeepers was accompanied by an increase in the number of non-UN peacekeeping operations. The UN also increasingly ‘delegated’ the large-scale, personnel-intensive functions to regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Liberian conflict and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the Balkans. In this context, Mark Malan identified the following major trends that characterised peacekeeping in the African context⁸:

- a withdrawal of UN peacekeepers from the African continent;
- an increase in robust, but ineffective multilateral military interventions by willing African coalitions, with the blessing of the UN Security Council (UNSC);
- the advent of bilateral military interventions, supposedly under the auspices of sub-regional organisations, but with UNSC approval; and
- the propagation of African peacekeeping capacity building initiatives.

In Liberia, for instance, ECOWAS and its military arm, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Observer Group (ECOMOG) deployed a robust peace enforcement mission in the early 1990s to stabilise the conflict zones, which effectively paved the way for the UN to follow with a more multi-dimensional peacebuilding mission⁹.

Following peacekeeping in Liberia by regional actors, the peacekeeping role of the AU in Burundi has been a particularly interesting and relevant case relating to the evolving AU playing a more direct role in African peacekeeping operations. On 7th October and 2nd December 2003, two ceasefire agreements were signed between Burundi’s transitional government and the main rebel group, which called for the deployment of an international peace force and the establishment of a Joint Ceasefire Commission to assist the parties in the implementation of the agreements.

It should be noted here that, since the establishment of the AU in 2001, there have been many pronouncements and much publicity by African leaders on the quest for African solutions to African problems pitted against the background of arguments that ‘local’ initiatives seem to work more effectively than foreign strategies, which tend to disregard or ignore African realities and cultures¹⁰. This paradigm shift indicated a much more proactive and pragmatic response to conflict resolution and coincided with a need on the African continent for greater African responsibility and political will to develop ‘local’

⁸ M. Malan, *Leaner and meaner? The future of peacekeeping in Africa*, “African Security Review” 2013, Vol. 8, No. 4, p. 48.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ A. V. Mansaray, *AMIS in Darfur: Africa’s litmus test in peacekeeping and political mediation*, “African Security Review” 1999, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 36.

or regional conflict prevention and management capabilities. In the macro political context, the birth of the AU marked an aspiration for greater African agency in continental security governance. Agency, in this context, refers to a desire to provide for and give effect to regional (African) mechanisms of governance – including security governance – on the continent. This coincides with the political objective and related notion of African solutions to African problems with specific reference to the protection of vulnerable civilian populations¹¹.

Following a formal decision by the AU to deploy the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in February 2003, the transitional government and the AU signed a status-of-forces agreement in March 2006, whereafter the AU mandated the deployment of troops from three countries, namely Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa¹².

AMIB was basically a hybrid between a traditional peacekeeping and a complex multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation as it operated in a complex mission environment with a peacekeeping mandate. Although it did not perform any of the multi-dimensional civilian functions typically associated with a complex peacekeeping operation, it provided the security dimension alongside a UN political office in Burundi¹³.

With hindsight, AMIB was affected by considerable challenges at both the political-strategic and the military strategic levels. The mission's logistical sustainment and funding were problematic, owing to the lack of substantive support from relevant African and international role-players. In terms of its own end-game, AMIB cannot be said to have fully facilitated the implementation of the ceasefire agreements, nor was it able to fully ensure that the defence and security situation in Burundi was generally stable and well managed by the newly created national defence and security structures. The mission was also unable to fully support the disarmament and demobilisation process and to advise on the reintegration of ex-combatants. Yet AMIB should be credited with efforts towards the stabilisation of large parts of the country. This way, it was able to assist in the implementation of the ceasefire agreements and, to its credit, contributed to the creation of conditions suitable for the deployment of the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) on 1 June 2004 – a considerably stronger force than AMIB, which had expanded to a total of 4,656 peacekeepers from 45 countries by February 2006¹⁴.

¹¹ D. Mickler, *op. cit.*, pp. 492-494.

¹² Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the situation in Burundi, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 04.12.2003, pp. 5-6.

¹³ C. de Coning, *Refining the African Standby Force concept*, "Conflict Trends" 2004, Issue 2, pp. 21-22.

¹⁴ F. Agoagye, *The African Mission in Burundi: Lessons learned from the first African Union peacekeeping operation*, "Conflict Trends" 2004, Issue 2, p. 14; Henry L. Stimson Center, *Future of peace operations program: UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB)*, 2007, <www.stimson.org/fopo/?SN=FP20040408637> (26.02.2007).

Even though the UN took over from the AU in Burundi, AMIB demonstrated that the continental body can in fact make useful, albeit limited, contributions to peacekeeping interventions in Africa¹⁵. Cedric De Coning argues that the practice whereby the AU deployed AMIB in 2003, followed by a UN mission (ONUB) in 2004, seemed to point towards a readiness on the part of African regional organisations to contribute towards stabilisation operations, especially when African actors have been involved in brokering a ceasefire and then wished to build on that momentum. However, because the AU lacked the staying power and multi-dimensional capability of the UN, it had to strategically pursue the alternative of burden-sharing with the UN¹⁶.

What is evident is that developments relating to the establishment of AMIB and especially ONUB coincided with the AU's Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), which specifically provides for the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) to cooperate and work closely with the UNSC. The CADSP also provides for the PSC to cooperate and work closely with relevant UN agencies in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa¹⁷.

In recent years, the AU deployed missions of its own to a number of conflict theatres, namely those of Darfur, Somalia, Mali and the CAR. De Coning remarks that these theatres represent a significant demonstration of capacity and experience. In all cases, these missions were undertaken and supported by the UN, European Union (EU) and bilateral partner organisations. This means that they also reflect a growing body of experience and frameworks of partnerships and corroborative action¹⁸. In fact, realising the continental shortcomings in the peacekeeping arena, the AU engaged the EU in recent years and hence the latter has increasingly become a recognisable security actor on the African continent¹⁹.

While it is important to note that African leaders and regional organisations have recognised the need to take primary responsibility for responding to crises and armed conflict, “the AU did not have the resources or capacity to intervene on a large scale” in armed conflict of a serious nature on

¹⁵ T. Murithi, *The African Union's foray into peacekeeping: Lessons from the hybrid mission in Darfur*, “Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development” 2009, Issue 14, <<https://www.brad.ac.uk/social-sciences/peace-conflict-and-development/issue-14/theafricanunionsforay.pdf>> (26.11.2017), p. 6.

¹⁶ C. de Coning, *The future of peacekeeping in Africa*, “Conflict Trends” 2006, Issue 2, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ *Solemn declaration on a common African defence and security policy*, African Union, 28.02.2004, <<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/declaration-cadsp-en.pdf>> (20.11.2017), pp. 16-17.

¹⁸ C. de Coning, *Enhancing the efficiency of the African Standby Force: The case for a shift to a just-in-time rapid response model?*, “Conflict Trends” 2014, Issue 2, p. 37.

¹⁹ M. Brosig, *The African peace and security architecture and its partners: A survey*, “African Security Review” 2014, Vol. 23, No. 3, p. 234.

the African continent²⁰. In other words, there has never been a harmonious balance between the political objectives (*ends*), the economy of force (*means*), and the application of force (*ways*). This is explored further in the section below – with specific reference to peacekeeping in Darfur.

African agency in Darfur: AMIS

The Sudanese government and two rebel groups in Darfur – the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement – signed an AU-mediated humanitarian ceasefire agreement on 8 April 2004. This agreement provided for the AU to send military observers to monitor and report on the ceasefire. This followed the displacement of about two million people who had been expelled from their homes by the Sudanese government's military operations against the rebel groups in the name of counterinsurgency – operations that turned into crimes against humanity and campaigns of “ethnic cleansing”. The government forces were backed by militias, known as the Janjaweed, and all of the above-mentioned actors as well as opportunistic bandits subjected Darfur's civilian population to abuse and insecurity²¹.

Genocide was often associated with events in Darfur since conflict started in February 2003 and the word gained currency among members of the international community. Clearly, Darfur was a humanitarian crisis that required robust international response as it was characterised by mass killings, massive displacement of civilians, the rampant raping of women, looting and destruction of property²².

Mickler rightly argues that the crisis in Sudan's Darfur area could be understood as a challenge to the practice and efficacy of African agency²³. The AU's efforts to develop its own continental security architecture to deal with conflicts have been welcome news to many, specifically with regard to war-ravaged places like Liberia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur²⁴. Indeed, hopes were high for the success of a full all-African peacekeeping operation²⁵. In response to the widespread death, displacement and human insecurity in Darfur, the AU deployed a small ceasefire monitoring team in 2004 – all in accordance with the organisation's nascent doctrine of 'non-indifference' to insecurity in its member states²⁶. In

²⁰ B. Prinsloo, D. van Niekerk, *UNAMID: An African solution to a complex case of geopolitical dynamics*, “African Security Review” 2015, Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 244.

²¹ Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change...*, *op. cit.*

²² A. V. Mansaray, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

²³ D. Mickler, *op. cit.*, pp. 487-489.

²⁴ A. C. Mansaray, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²⁶ D. Mickler, *op. cit.*, pp. 487-489.

this regard, the AU established AMIS initially as a 120-person ceasefire monitoring commission with more than 5,000 AU peacekeepers.

The numbers of peacekeepers grew to about 7 000 in September 2005, but AMIS never really succeeded in bringing security to the war-torn Darfur province²⁷. Media coverage became progressively critical. Reports on AMIS generally pointed towards the mission as overstretched and that the civilian population continued to face human rights abuses ranging from killings, rape to forced displacements. Amnesty International, for instance, stated that AMIS had been left without having the personnel or the resources to protect the people of Darfur in a rapidly deteriorating situation and that in some cases it had not even been able to protect itself²⁸. Another Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Refugees International, likewise reported, “AMIS’ shortcomings have come into full focus. AMIS does not have the ability or the resources to carry out its job of monitoring a ceasefire that is widely and regularly violated by all sides in an escalating conflict”²⁹. In October 2004, the AU increased the number of AMIS personnel and changed the mission mandate and structure. AMIS was thereby transformed from a contingent primarily consisting of unarmed military observers into a mission consisting of armed force protectors, unarmed civilian police and support teams.

The problem, however, was in the effective implementation of the mandate in terms of the required ends and means. AMIS personnel lacked training and suffered in the areas of operational capacity, logistics and planning. In addition, bad weather conditions compounded the mission’s problems and hampered its impact from the start. Otherwise, political initiatives to achieve the mandate through proactive measures within the mission’s rules of engagement were also falling short. In this regard, a continuous lack of respect for the ceasefire agreement made the implementation of the mandate extremely difficult.

AMIS was clearly faced with potential failure as a high-profile African undertaking and hence the organisation decided in the first quarter of 2005 to make significant changes to its approach. This coincided with an AU-led assessment mission in March 2005 with the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations, the EU, the U.S., Canada and other international partners³⁰. The findings of the assessment were that AMIS was hard-pressed to implement its mandate effectively while three weaknesses were specifically highlighted:

²⁷ R. Sharamo, *The African Union’s peacekeeping experience*, “Conflict Trends” 2006, Issue 3, p. 51.

²⁸ Amnesty International, *Sudan: Obstruction and delay – Peacekeepers needed in Darfur now*, 22.10.2006 <<https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-obstruction-and-delay-peacekeepers-needed-darfur-now>> (23.11.2017).

²⁹ Refugees International, *No power to protect: The African Union Mission in Sudan*, November 2005 <<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/44FCCEC18913392BB85257155006EDFB1-ri-sdn-18apr.pdf>> (23.11.2017).

³⁰ Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change...*, p. 4.

command and control, logistical support and operational practice³¹. During a May 2005 conference, international donors further pledged over \$ 312 million to enhance the mission strength from 3 320 personnel to a total of 7 700 personnel³². A third phase of deployment was also envisaged, namely to bring the total strength of AMIS to 12 300 military, police and civilian personnel³³.

The assessment and intended strengthening however did not bring AMIS to the end of its challenges, namely shortcomings with regard to human resources and logistics. The full deployment of AMIS that was to have taken place by September had not been achieved. In December 2005, another assessment was conducted by the AU, the UN and other relevant actors. A key conclusion from the assessment was that AMIS should provide a much more aggressive response to the ongoing violence in Darfur and that the peacekeepers had to be equipped and supported to do so³⁴.

From its inception, AMIS experienced problems with its mandate. In this context, many role-players and observers advocated a more robust mandate that would enable the mission to extend its protection to civilians in Darfur. Having suffered fatalities towards the end of 2005, critics increasingly contended that the AMIS mandate was not robust enough. It became clear that AMIS was not able to keep the ongoing violence in check and consequently displacement camps were becoming larger and more permanent with some very negative consequences as a vicious cycle of dependency developed in displacement camps³⁵.

The following observations capture much of what was generally observed and said about the role of AMIS in Darfur. Adekeye Adebajo stated that “[t]he ill-equipped and poorly resourced AU peacekeepers deployed in 2004 – with a restricted ceasefire-monitoring mandate – in a region the size of France have scarcely been able to protect themselves, let alone Darfuris”³⁶. Daniel Pepper and Abraham McLaughlin observed that “AU troops are only allowed to use force to protect themselves – or civilians in their immediate vicinity. Most

³¹ H. Boshoff, *The African Union Mission in Sudan*, “African Security Review”, 2010, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 60.

³² Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change...*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³³ H. Boshoff, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change...*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁵ S. Mann, *When will we learn the lesson?*, “Journal of International Peace Operations” 2006, Vol. 2, No.1, p. 8.

³⁶ A. Adebajo, *Tread warily through the politics of peacekeeping*, “Sunday Times” 29.04.2007, p. 21.

experts agreed that this limited mandate severely hampered their ability to secure the area”³⁷.

The mission situation involved the dynamics of a complex emergency short of genocide, i.e. serious crimes against humanity and a considerable amount of war crimes. To that end, the situation required the equivalent of a UN Chapter VII (peace enforcement) mandate – also implying the utilisation of light and medium-armoured vehicles or mechanised infantry.

Increasingly, international public debates centred on the question as to whether AMIS could and should be transformed into a non-AU institution, and the cash-strapped AU mission in Sudan thus came under pressure to hand over its Darfur operations to the UN. The rationale for such drive centred on the need for better ways and means pertaining to fiscal stability, reasons of logistical enhancement as well as the well-established and tested command and control structure of the UN that was needed for a large mission in Darfur³⁸.

Allan Vic Mansaray rightly points out that AMIS lacked the military material and support mechanisms that should have served as a deterrent not only to the government forces, but also the Janjaweed, which challenged AU personnel on several occasions. He quoted a former AMIS sector commander who attributed the main problems of AMIS to a “seriously constrained concept of operations, a chronic lack of resources and serious strategic and operational gaps”³⁹.

The problems AMIS encountered in Darfur were not limited to the strategic and operational levels. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir and his government opposed a UN peacekeeping operation but then indicated that they were willing to discuss UN involvement after the conclusion of a peace accord in the talks in Abuja, Nigeria, where the Sudanese government entered into an agreement with the largest rebel force in May 2006⁴⁰. The Sudanese government also made it very difficult for funds to be transferred from Addis Ababa to AU troops on the ground. Practically, this caused a long-winded route before funding could reach AMIS personnel and the delayed remittance of funds created some apprehension among the troops, which resulted in low morale at ground level. Another challenge at the political level concerned the AU itself. Although it is not unusual for differences to arise when conflicts develop and have to be addressed in a multinational context, the Darfur crisis seemed to have caused tensions between African leaders who favoured a hard

³⁷ D. Pepper, A. McLaughlin, *AU struggles to calm Darfur*, “Christian Science Monitor”, 12.12.2005, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1212/p06s01-woaf.html>> (23.11.2017).

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, *The African Union Mission in Sudan, imperatives for immediate change..., op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁹ A. V. Mansaray, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ United Nations News Centre, *UN moves on several fronts to reinforce peace accord*, 15.05.2006 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=18482#.VIyypuKMV_4g> (26.11.2017).

line against the Sudanese government and those who favoured a soft approach⁴¹.

In the final analysis, one can summarise the predicament of AMIS as follows. There was a clear political aspiration for an early African response to Darfur, but the AU found itself in a situation, where it was ill equipped institutionally and under-resourced to resolve the conflict situation successfully or even play a meaningful role in conflict facilitation. The AU's proactive role enjoyed Western support but as a continental organisation, it was not able to marshal the required means and ways with regard to funds, troops, and equipment to conduct a large-scale civilian protection operation. The material constraints were especially evident, but the political constraints imposed upon the mission also constrained the mission in Darfur⁴².

In the mission area, insecurity remained the order of the day in much of the Darfur area. In June 2007, after much political arm-twisting in Khartoum, President al-Bashir and the Sudanese government consented to the establishment of UNAMID as a joint or hybrid UN–AU peacekeeping force with a personnel strength of 26,000 to be deployed to Darfur. Practically, this represented a significant development in African peacekeeping as UNAMID was intended to become one of the largest UN peacekeeping operations in history, while the UN and the AU also sought to assemble a force that would represent a predominantly 'African character' in an effort to retain both the impartiality and competency required to undertake this challenging mission⁴³.

Hybridisation in Darfur: UNAMID

UNSC Resolution 1769 of 2007 called for the creation of an UN–AU hybrid force that would replace AMIS with UNAMID. Resolution 1769 of 2007 authorised a force which would incorporate AMIS personnel and consist of up to 19 555 military personnel, including 360 military observers and liaison officers, and a civilian component including up to 3 772 police personnel and 19 formed police units comprising up to 140 personnel each⁴⁴.

The following objectives and tasks were identified for UNAMID⁴⁵:

- Help restore security conditions for economic development, provide humanitarian assistance and return internally displaced persons;

⁴¹ A. V. Mansaray, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁴² D. Mickler, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

⁴³ *Momentous year for United Nations peacekeeping as it mounts two unique operations in Africa..., op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *UN Security Council Resolution 1769, 2007, adopted by the Security Council at its 5727th meeting, on 31 July 2007, New York*, p. 3.

⁴⁵ S. Kreps, *The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur: Implications and prospects for success*, "African Security Review" 2007, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 70-71.

- Protect civilian populations under imminent threat of violence and prevent attacks against civilians;
- Monitor and observe compliance with the Darfur peace agreement;
- Assist with the political process;
- Promote respect for and protection of human rights and the rule of law in Darfur;
- Monitor, verify and report on efforts to disarm the Janjaweed militia; and
- Monitor and report on the situation along the borders with Chad and the CAR.

UNSC Resolution 1769 of 2007 also provided for unity of command and control which, in accordance with basic principles of peacekeeping, means a single chain of command, while also allowing for command and control structures and backstopping to be provided by the UN. This essentially meant that the AU would run the day-to-day operations while the UN would be in overall control of the mission⁴⁶. The mission force was, as far as possible, sourced from African countries. In this regard, countries such as Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Egypt, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda gave early indications of their interest to serve as troop-contributing countries⁴⁷. Eventually, the main military- and police-contributing countries were Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia – thus mostly African states with the rest from countries in the developing world⁴⁸. In fact, the largest number of troops earmarked for UNAMID was from Nigeria. In total, 3,700 Nigerian personnel were eventually deployed to the Darfur region to serve in the UNAMID force, which was strongly motivated by U.S. assistance in relation to debt relief for Nigeria. UNAMID was, however, lacking strategic assets and specifically in serious need of assets such as helicopters and transport vehicles. The U.S. took a leading role in approaching countries such as Ukraine as one of a very few countries in the world that possessed a significant number of transport helicopters. However, negotiations did not succeed as the Ukrainian government had to deal with a major economic crisis⁴⁹.

On 31st December 2007, AU peacekeepers were officially transformed into UN peacekeepers and the UN Secretary-General announced “a new and

⁴⁶ T. Othieno, N. Samasuwo, *A critical analysis of Africa's experiments with hybrid missions and security collaboration*, “African Security Review” 2007, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 33.

⁴⁷ S. Kreps, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁴⁸ UN Mission's contributions by country, month of report, 31.01.2009, United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2009/jan09_5.pdf> (15.02.2009).

⁴⁹ M. E. Henke, *Great powers and UN force generation: a case study of UNAMID*, “International Peacekeeping”, 2016, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 480-487.

profoundly challenging chapter in the history of United Nations peacekeeping^{[50](#)}. The command structure also reflected a strong African presence^{[51](#)}. UNAMID was authorised to take the field in January 2008 with a UN Chapter VII mandate. However, as far as means and ways were concerned, the mission experienced considerable challenges from the start. In fact, so poorly provisioned were UNAMID personnel that they even had to buy their own paint to turn their green AU helmets into the UN blue at the time of so-called rehatting^{[52](#)}. Politically, the Sudanese government demanded that the mission be entirely African, save for Pakistani and Chinese contributions. The Sudanese government also placed onerous restrictions on the operational scope of the hybrid deployment, banning night movement and requiring official permission to conduct flights. A week after boots got on the ground, the Sudanese army even fired at a truck convoy from the peacekeeping force in western Darfur, near the Chad border. Moreover, with the neighbouring Chadian air force having bombed Sudanese army positions inside Darfur in late December 2007, the borderlands in Darfur have become the proverbial hornet's nest and a potential source of interstate conflict between Sudan and Chad, backed by China and France, respectively^{[53](#)}.

Logistically, serious challenges confronted the peacekeepers. Towards the end of November 2008, only about 12 000 of the newly mandated force of 26 000 peacekeepers were deployed and some key elements of UNAMID were still not in place. Furthermore, airport infrastructure and aircraft handling capacity, as well as deteriorating runway conditions posed serious challenges to the number of daily flights into Darfur. While the capacity for road convoy movement of contingent-owned equipment was increasing, difficult road conditions within Darfur posed particular challenges for the transportation of heavy equipment. It became clear that UNAMID peacekeepers were operating in a very challenging operational environment as the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) admitted that it had been difficult to attract and retain staff because of the security situation and harsh living and working conditions. Many security challenges faced the peacekeepers in the form of high levels of banditry, carjacking, military engagements and deadly attacks on UNAMID forces. UNAMID members and patrols further continually faced restrictions on their

^{[50](#)} *United Nations peace operations: Year in review 2007*, Peace and Security Section of the UN Department of Public Information, New York, March 2008, p. 1.

^{[51](#)} *Darfur - UNAMID - Facts and Figures*, United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations, 2008, New York <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unamid/facts.html> (16.02.2009).

^{[52](#)} A. Onoja, *Peacekeeping challenges in Africa*, "Conflict Trends" 2008, Issue 3, p. 42.

^{[53](#)} S. Roughneen, *Chad, Sudan and a risky Western game*, "ISN Security Watch", 04.02.2008, p. 1.

freedom of movement by Sudanese government officials⁵⁴. By the end of 2009, UNAMID had managed to acquire several civilian helicopters, but was still in need of 18 utility helicopters and six attack choppers in order to fulfil its mandate⁵⁵.

These were not UNAMID's only problems. UNAMID was under constant pressure from the Sudanese government after the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno Ocampo, indicated that President al-Bashir could be indicted for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur. Thus, UNAMID not only suffered from a battle with shortages of resources to carry out its mandate, but also from political heat generated by the Sudanese government over a possible warrant to be issued for President al-Bashir⁵⁶.

On the ground, governmental aerial bombardments and clashes between the Sudanese armed forces and armed rebel movements continued. Furthermore, sexual and gender-based violence continued to occur, often in tandem with impunity and a lack of action from law enforcement authorities. As far as the humanitarian situation was concerned, the UNSG reported "critical humanitarian challenges" and mentioned that humanitarian aid organisations continued to struggle to maintain existing programmes and expand operations to accessible areas⁵⁷.

Many observers were highly critical of the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping mission. Tim Murithi argued that UNAMID was confronted with similar problems that beset AMIS. He also argued that since July 2008, Darfur has experienced a deterioration of the security situation and that violence included high levels of banditry, occasional military engagements and ethnic clashes. Fierce attacks on UNAMID forces from the Government of Sudan also resulted in the death of civilians. Moreover, the food security situation in the region remained precarious. All of this coincided with the fact that UNAMID faced key challenges in terms of its ability to transport personnel and equipment⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 12.12. 2008, pp. 1-7.

⁵⁵ B. L. Prinsloo, *The AU/UN hybrid peace operation in Africa – a new approach to maintain international peace and security*, Doctoral thesis, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, March 2012, p. 250.

⁵⁶ A. V. Mansaray, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

⁵⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 10.02.2010, pp.10-12.

⁵⁸ T. Murithi, *op. cit.*, p.13.

Three years after the deployment, even the UN Secretary-General expressed his frustration with the lack of progress in Darfur⁵⁹.

It has been more than six years since the situation in Darfur came to the forefront of the Security Council's agenda. The conflict in Darfur remains among the most complex facing the international community. For several years, progress towards ending the crisis in Darfur has been fluctuating. In spite of the best efforts of the African Union-United Nations Joint Mediation, since the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006, attempts to generate broader buy-in for a negotiated peace have remained frustrated by the fragmentation of Darfur's armed movements and by ongoing military operations on the ground, which have caused additional displacement and suffering among the civilian population and further undermined trust between the parties and exacerbated their intransigence with regard to the peace negotiations.

As far as the political level is concerned, Rebecca Tinsley asserted that the UN's "conciliatory attitude" towards the Sudanese government and related "willingness to appease President Bashir" undermined the UN effort in Darfur. She expounded that before a single soldier set foot in Darfur, the UN had conceded to al-Bashir's demand that his government would dictate the terms of deployment. She observed that, "after removing UNAMID's teeth" by dictating the terms, Bashir then delayed the mission's arrival by refusing to provide land for bases, stopping equipment leaving airports, delaying visas by six months or more, and randomly imposing restrictions on movement. The UN on its part, she argued, instead of applying sanctions that had been approved by the UNSC long ago, favoured "regional conflict management" that in effect meant using inexperienced and outnumbered African troops, some of whom went without remuneration for months⁶⁰.

Since its inception in December 2007 until February 2009, a total of 25 UNAMID peacekeepers lost their lives in Darfur, namely 16 troops, 6 police officials, 1 military observer and 2 local civilians⁶¹. In his report to the UNSC on the deployment of UNAMID, dated 10 February 2009, the UNSG Ban Ki-moon stated that conditions in Darfur were characterised by a dramatic deterioration in the security situation. He also referred to an escalation in the level of violence, which signalled an investment in conflict rather than a serious commitment to peaceful negotiations⁶².

⁵⁹ Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 14.07.2010, p. 15.

⁶⁰ R. Tinsley, *The failure of UNAMID*, "The Guardian", 01.01.2009 <www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/01/darfur> (26.11.2017).

⁶¹ *Darfur - UNAMID - Facts and Figures...*, op. cit.

⁶² Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, New York, 10.02.2009, p. 6, 11.

In 2010, three years after the establishment of UNAMID, the total strength of UNAMID military personnel stood at 17 199, which amounted to 87 percent of its mandated strength. The civilian staff personnel stood at 4 261, which boiled down to 77 percent of the approved strength. The strength of police officers stood at 2 820, which was 74 percent of the authorised strength⁶³. Despite an improvement in the strength of UNAMID since 2009, the UNSG emphasised the logistical shortcomings of the peacekeeping operation: “The military contingent-owned equipment capabilities of the units in Darfur have continued to be a challenge as some contingents remained critically underequipped and did not meet the desired serviceability and self-sustainment standards as required under the approved contingent-owned equipment manual”⁶⁴.

Still, the UNSG did not seem to be discouraged by the progress made in relation to finding peace in Darfur and commended UNAMID on the work made towards facilitating an agreement between the warring parties. He also reported that UNAMID continued its work on promoting human rights issues and the rule of law, both with the Government of the Sudan and Darfuran society more generally⁶⁵.

In the final analysis, it needs to be said that UNAMID as a ‘hybrid solution’ to the challenges in Darfur – especially in the first two years of deployment – did not provide real or notable improvements for the ordinary citizens on the ground. The overall human rights situation remained of serious concern owing inter alia to clashes and aerial bombardments between the government of Sudan and the armed rebel movements⁶⁶. Thus, UNAMID was inadequate in resolving the crisis in Darfur in its first years of deployment and unable to find the required balance between its political objectives (*ends*), the economy of force (*means*), and the application of force (*ways*). Ongoing violence and mass population displacements remained the order of the day and the UNSC’s role in the indictment of President al-Bashir even led to tension between the hybrid partners. In view of the above, UNAMID found itself embroiled and entangled in many of the same political and military challenges that confronted AMIS and battled to give effect to its tasks and responsibility as outlined by the UNSG and the AU Commission⁶⁷.

However, UNAMID did seem to find its feet after three years of deployment and in this regard James Sloan observed that earlier arguments that

⁶³ Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), United Nations Security Council, New York, 18.10.2010, p. 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.

⁶⁶ Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, United Nations Secretary-General, New York, 10.02.2009, pp. 6, 11.

⁶⁷ D. Mickler, *op. cit.*, pp. 503-505.

“UNAMID was not the appropriate way forward in 2007” were of little assistance and a withdrawal of UNAMID – despite its limitations – would have left people in the refugee camps without protection and food. In the words of Sloan: “It would, of course, be unimaginable to pull out UNAMID and replacing it with nothing”⁶⁸.

Appraisal and evaluation

Following a strategy between political, strategic and military role-players is usually a daunting task. Formulating and implementing a strategy between multinational political and military actors is almost impossible. Still, the question is: what can be learned from the above as far as ends, means and ways in African peacekeeping are concerned. In other words, what insights from this research can contribute to making better sense of military strategic challenges in the African peacekeeping context?

In a seminal work on peacekeeping operations, De Coning *et al*⁶⁹ highlight two matters of major importance. Firstly, that the AU have had to respond to increasingly to complex conflicts or security environments over the last decade. Secondly, that contemporary and future peacekeeping operations will see the ongoing development of partnerships between African actors and actors in the international community, such as the UN and the EU.

From the above it is clear that events have taken place in Africa where the AU or sub-regional organisations were the first to respond to emerging crisis situations. As far as AMIB and UNAMID were concerned, African actors undertook short, robust stabilisation or peace enforcement operations, and after some time, these operations were transformed into multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operations⁷⁰.

The above-mentioned cases of hybridisation also coincided with developments since the mid-1990s as far as African states started to play more important roles in UN peacekeeping operations, especially on the African continent. Despite the many shortcomings, African states progressively provided sizable contingents for UN peacekeeping operations, thereby increasing the representativeness, perceived impartiality and legitimacy of such operations⁷¹. If Africa’s position is considered in the international context, it needs to be noted that the increase in troop contributions to the UN in the early

⁶⁸ J. Sloan, *UN peacekeeping in Darfur: A quagmire that we cannot accept*, “E-International Relations” 03.06.2014 <<http://www.e-ir.info/2014/06/03/un-peacekeeping-in-darfur-a-quagmire-that-we-cannot-accept/>> (24.01.2017).

⁶⁹ C. De Coning, L. Gelot, J. Karlsrud, *Towards an African model of peace operations* [in:] *The future of African peace operations*, ed. C. de Coning, L. Gelot, J. Karlsrud, London, 2016, pp. 135-136.

⁷⁰ C. De Coning, *Refining the African Standby Force concept..., op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁷¹ M. Malan, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

1990s was mainly the result of developed states contributing troops to peacekeeping operations. At the beginning of 1991, out of the top ten contributors, only two were developing states, namely Ghana and Nepal. Ten years onwards, in 2001, the overwhelming majority of the top ten contributors of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping operations worldwide were developing states. Moreover, three of these states were from Africa, namely Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana⁷².

Yet, the case of Darfur also illustrates that much more than political will and commitment to troop contributions is needed as peacekeeping operations are immensely costly affairs played out in messy theatres. As far as the AU is concerned, the peacekeeping experience in Darfur clearly revealed that the organisation⁷³:

- Suffered from a lack of strategic management capacity;
- Had no effective mechanisms for operational level mission management;
- Had insufficient logistical support and ability to manage logistics;
- Lacked capacity in communication and information systems; and
- Was wholly dependent on external partners in specific technical fields.

The crux of the matter is that African leaders may well be willing to deploy their forces, but if they do not have the necessary airlift capability, logistical support and financial assistance, their efforts are highly unlikely to be realised or successful. In other words, without the required means they would not be in a position to work towards a balance between their political aims and objectives on the one hand and, the economy of force and application of force on the other. Practically and logically, adequate funding for airlift resources, for instance, is crucial in rapid deployment and is indeed a cause for concern in the African context. The absence of an airlift capability means that virtually no peacekeeping operation is possible – to mention only one of many pressing operational factors. Currently, very few African states have any strategic lift capabilities worth mentioning. Moreover, the problem is that not even the potential locomotives of Africa's development and stability – countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria and Egypt – have the commensurate military capacity to shoulder the troops and monetary means required for peacekeeping deployments on a sustainable basis. Moreover, these countries face considerable domestic security challenges that are either a greater priority than security challenges elsewhere, or exceed the security capabilities they can muster⁷⁴.

⁷² *Contributors to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Monthly summary of contributors*, United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, 28.02.2001, <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/feb.htm> (21.03.2001).

⁷³ M. Malan, *op cit.*, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴ J. Cilliers, *The 2014 South African Defence Review: Rebuilding after years of abuse, neglect and decay*, "ISS Policy Brief" No. 56, 25.06.2014, p.5.

In addition to the above, the case of the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is particularly instructive and insightful. The experiences of AMISOM also shows that AU operations are usually “defined by great ambition but deficient resources”⁷⁵. On 19 January 2007, the AU mandated a force of 8,000 plus civilian elements to form AMISOM with a view to keeping the peace in Mogadishu after Ethiopia had invaded Somalia at the invitation of the Transitional Federal Government to defeat the network of Islamic courts which had taken control of large parts of the country. However, only two battalions provided by Uganda had been deployed in 2007, followed by two battalions from Burundi in 2008. Nigeria and Ghana made commitments to provide a total of 1,200 troops but had no transport resources to deploy the troops to Somalia⁷⁶. Expectedly, observers were quick to contend that the AU and African countries had failed to deliver. In view of the above, Murithi observed as follows: “The limitations of the AU’s fledgling institutions have been exposed by the entrapment and limited functionality of AMISOM in Somalia”⁷⁷. By early 2009, additional AMISOM troops were indeed deployed to Somalia, but AMISOM had very limited capabilities and had been “generally accepted as a non-threatening presence insofar as it does not represent a threat to armed interests in Mogadishu”⁷⁸. It should also be noted in this regard that the UN showed a clear unwillingness to take over the responsibility in Somalia from AFRICOM in view of the fact that a comprehensive peace agreement could not be reached⁷⁹.

At the same time, it should be clear that the involvement of the UN cannot be regarded as the only remedy to solving the prevalence of violence, the targeting of civilians and the maintenance of peace in Africa⁸⁰. It would also be wrong or short-sighted to disregard some positive aspects about UNAMID⁸¹. Prinsloo and Van Niekerk correctly point out that the mission showed renewed solidarity among African states through the AU and presented a fresh approach to solving conflict on the continent. UNAMID was a compromise for both the AU and the larger international community. On the one side the AU did not have the resources or capacity to intervene on a solid footing in Darfur. On the other hand the international community did not have the political legitimacy to intervene by itself without African partners. The success of UNAMID thus lies in the fact that it allowed the AU to work equally with the broader international

⁷⁵ C. Hull, E. Svensson, *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM): Exemplifying African Union peacekeeping challenges*, Swedish Defence Research Agency User Report, 2008, p. 9.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁷⁷ T. Murithi, *op. cit.*, p.17.

⁷⁸ Refugees International, *Somalia: RI statement to UN Security Council*, 03.04.2008 <<http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-ri-statement-un-security-council>> (16.02.2009).

⁷⁹ C. Hull, E. Svensson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ T. Murithi, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸¹ B. Prinsloo, D. van Niekerk, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

community with a view to addressing the complexity of conflict dynamics in Darfur and collectively taking charge of the continent's peace and security challenges.

Lastly, it is important to consider the African voice on the international stage as far as future international, strategic partnerships are concerned. There is a need on all sides to clarify the long-term political objectives between African and non-African actors. In addition, all relevant actors or partners must have a common understanding of the objectives they are pursuing in a context of strategic coherence with a view to ensuring that all actors are playing a role towards the achievement of the larger objectives. Thus, there must be consultations among relevant partners on shared political objectives beyond urgent peacekeeping priorities⁸². As such, this matter cannot be a mere case of African actors doing the heavy lifting and the UN playing the management role.

Conclusion

A positive aspect of Darfur was certainly that African actors and the AU were demonstrating both agency and responsibility in their approach to conflict and insecurity on the African continent. However, the AU and AMIS had not been able to fully respond to the demands of the situation in Darfur. Whereas strategy is fundamentally about the ways in which military power is applied or used to achieve political objectives, the case of Darfur is clearly one where there was a gap between the desires of the AU to assume more agency in security governance on the African continent. Even the UN – the world's preeminent organisation in the field of peace and security – was taking on a task where it could not boast of sufficient military capacity – implying that there was never a balance between the political level (*ends*) and the military level (*means* and *ways*). In both peacekeeping operations – AMIS and UNAMID – political and policy demands on the one hand and budget-related constraints on the other were at the centre of challenges relating to a better balancing of ends and means.

From the above it can be argued that the African continent and the AU as a peacekeeping actor cannot 'go it alone' in providing the stability which is essential for security and development – even though hybridisation does not offer a panacea for Africa's peacekeeping challenges⁸³. After all, the case of Darfur (UNAMID) did not realise any substantial or even notable short-term improvement to the situation as far as protection of civilians and human rights challenges were concerned. Also, as argued above, UNAMID found itself embroiled and entangled in many of the same challenges that confronted AMIS.

Still, from the above it is also clear that the creation of UNAMID as a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur (Sudan)

⁸² C. de Coning, L. Gelot, J. Karlsrud, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁸³ T. Murithi, *op. cit.* p. 17.

should be considered or recognised as one of the most notable efforts in the field of contemporary security governance and hybrid arrangements involving both African regional and global peacekeeping actors and resources. It is also clear that hybridisation in international peacekeeping offers wider possibilities and broader international involvement in conflicts. Potentially, it also leads to better ways of burden-sharing among the relevant actors, as well as dialogue and co-operation between the AU and the UN, and even actors such as the EU. In view of the above, the importance of hybridisation in security governance and the need for strengthened partnerships between peacekeeping actors on the African continent and the international community remain of great importance and scholarly concern to researchers and practitioners alike.

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