Houston Area Model United Nations
Standard Committee

African Union



Chair | Anaamika Munnungi

Topic B: Addressing the Stunted Progress Towards the "Silencing the Guns in Africa" Project & Facilitating Its Accelerated Growth

Houston Area Model United Nations 52

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Chair Letter

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the 52nd edition of HAMUN, and its African Union Committee! My name is Anaamika Munnungi, and it is my honour to serve as your chair for this year's conference.

Although I may be relatively new to Texas, having been born and raised in the Golden State, I feel as though the 4 years I have spent here have done their job and fully immersed me in Texan culture. I began my Model UN journey somewhere in the interim, and currently I'm a freshman studying Astrophysics at Texas A&M University. I've been participating in Model United Nations for as long as I can remember; that is, since the 7th grade, and could not think of a program that has been more rewarding. I've participated across conferences as a delegate, staff member, and secretariat member, and can promise the experience only gets better the more you put yourself into it.

I chose to staff the AU largely due to its internal workings and the way it functions as a specialized committee. The heavy involvement of the Union in intra-continental affairs and their various branches related to peacekeeping has led me to become incredibly excited to see how you work through committee diplomatically to accomplish your goals. I believe there is so much to work with in this committee, and trust all of you as more than capable of making the most of this experience.

I am so excited to see all of you and how you'll contribute to this debate and I'm so grateful to be able to experience this committee with you. Whether this is your first specialized committee, or you're a seasoned veteran, I want you to know I am always available if you have any questions or concerns. Cheers to fruitful debate, and a successful committee!



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Background Information

The main institution that represents Africa as a continent politically, socially, economically, and defensively is the African Union (AU). In terms of the organizational history of the AU, it traces back to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25 May 1963 by the signing of the OAU Charter by 32 independent African nations. The OAU was conceived at the peak of the decolonization process within the African continent and Pan-African ideologies, with a key role played by ensuring the maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the new independent states and facilitating the liberation struggle of colonies governed by colonial regimes or minority rule governments. According to OAU principles, it was believed that the attainment of political freedom could best be achieved if cooperation among African nations were promoted.

The organization thus extended its support to liberation struggles in countries including Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, always opposing any form of apartheid or colonial domination.

As a result of this realization on the part of the majority of the African government leaders in the late 1990s and beginning of the millennium, the African continent saw the promulgation of the constitutive act of the African union in 2000, leading to the official inauguration of the AU in 2002 as the successor to the OAU. Compared to the latter's prioritization on questions concerning sovereignty and decolonization, the mandate of the AU included economic integration, sustainable development, peace and security, good governance and protection of human rights, democracy as well as increased continental representation on the international stage. With 55 member countries, the AU remains the primary continental political institution in Africa.

In terms of relevance towards the topic of study, there are key aspects concerning the significance of the African Union (AU) regarding the research question, which involves identifying the measures taken to overcome the existing security issues preventing Africa from realizing the Silencing the Guns in Africa vision. The Silencing the Guns initiative is among the key pillars of Agenda 2063 concerning building a peaceful and stable Africa; the idea stems from the AU's dedication to bringing an end to any form of war, conflict, gender-based violence, and genocide within Africa. The adoption of the AU's Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa back in 2017 offers a framework considering the political, economic, social, legal, and environmental aspects of conflict resolution, with initial goals of attaining conflict-free Africa by 2020.

Failing to achieve the stipulated goal illustrated the gap between the continent's commitment to silencing the guns versus its actualization.

The continuing violence, terrorism, and extremism, unconstitutional takeovers, political instabilities, poor governance, socioeconomic disparities, trafficking of illicit arms and ammunition, and under-implementation of peace accords were some of the factors that led to the delay. Realizing the enormity of these challenges, the AU extended the implementation time frame up to 2030. This gave room for improving and hastening current structures put in place to maintain the initiative. Some of these include the Peace and Security Council (PSC), African Peace and Security Architecture, AU Peace Fund, early warning and prevention systems, mediation programs, disarmament projects, and reconstruction programs in the aftermath of wars. Appointing an AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns was meant to increase diplomatic engagement for advocacy and mediation purposes.

Nonetheless, evidence of persistency and emergence of conflict situations within various parts of Africa suggests that the current issue lies primarily in the implementation process. It has become evident through the mid-term strategic review conducted by the African Union on the Master Roadmap towards Silencing the Guns, scheduled for 2025. In essence, the report emphasized the importance of identifying implementation gaps to enhance efforts throughout the subsequent years between 2025–2030. Thus, accelerated implementation demands the translation of commitment made so far into concrete national and regional measures. Specifically, this includes upgrading early-warning mechanisms, capacity building for conflict prevention and mediation processes, tackling the root causes of instabilities, fighting illegal trade of arms, and ensuring sustainability.



TOPIC B HISTORY

One of the primary agendas for peace and security established under the auspices of the African Union is "Silencing the Guns in Africa." Under Agenda 2063 – the vision document by the African Union that seeks to achieve transformation of Africa to an integrated, prosperous, peaceful, and influential continent in the international community by 2063 – peace and security fall under Aspiration 4: "A Peaceful and Secure Africa." In this aspiration, Africa will have fully functional systems for preventing and resolving conflicts on all fronts, where negotiation precedes combat, while fostering cultures of peace amongst its citizens. This goal has always seemed highly unrealistic since its establishment; it entailed ending all forms of war, stopping genocide, minimizing violent conflicts and acts of gender-based violence, and ensuring conditions allowing for Africa to develop without being undermined by armed insecurity.

The origins of the initiative trace back before the inclusion within the broader strategy for Agenda 2063. In 2013, during the solemn declaration for the 50th anniversary celebrations of OAU/AU, African leaders pledged not to hand down any more of their existing conflicts to subsequent generations, and committed themselves to bringing an end to every war in Africa before 2020. This pledge took shape in the form of a program, namely, the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps towards Silencing the Guns in Africa. In 2016, the PSC held a retreat in Lusaka, Zambia, precisely aimed at devising actionable steps for meeting the objective by 2020. In 2017, the Roadmap received approval from the Assembly. According to the Roadmap document itself, there cannot merely be any militaristic understanding of the challenge presented by armed conflict. Rather, issues of economic disparity, constitutional manipulation, human rights violations, marginalization, disparities, bad governance concerning ethnic diversity, recurrences in post-conflict scenarios, and outside influence were amongst some of the structural factors driving the conflicts in Africa.

The Master Roadmap thus embraces a holistic definition of peace, which entails not just an end to hostilities within the battlefields but also encompasses a wide range of initiatives in areas such as politics, economics, law, society, and the environment. Politically, this entails issues related to conflict prevention and resolution, democratic politics, constitution making, power sharing, and enhancement of African peace and security structures. Legally, this entails arms control systems, national laws, and compliance with African Union instruments. Economically, the recognition that high levels of unemployment, inequalities, weak state capacity, resource contestations, and low development are conducive environments to armed recruitment is critical to sustaining peace. Socially, reconciliation, inclusivity, youth engagement, women engagement, and reconstruction after conflict are crucial to sustaining peace. It is pertinent to note that adopting a narrow view of 'silencing the guns' would only involve disarmament without tackling other socioeconomic factors responsible for conflicts.

TOPIC B CASE EXAMPLES:

Sudan: Conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces

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There is nothing more illustrative of the challenges posed by the implementation of "Silencing the Guns" than the situation prevailing in Sudan today. The fight between the Sudanese armed forces and the rapid support forces began on 15th April 2023 and escalated into a full-blown crisis that cut across politics, military operations, and humanitarian crises within the country. This situation illustrates that initiatives directed toward peacebuilding through military means prove futile when done in isolation without accompanying political solutions. Some of the attempts made by the African Union toward achieving this goal include the application of the Master Roadmap.

The Central African Republic and DDR disarmament

One of the better examples demonstrating the potential contributions of DDR and restoration of statehood toward disarmament and silencing the guns within Central Africa is that of the Central African Republic (CAR). Within January 2026, the African Union made note of notable improvements in security, post-conflict reconstruction, economic development, DDR/R, and redeployment of statehood over expanding areas of its territory, having previously engaged itself in political dialogues alongside ECCAS, ICGLR, and the UN.

From the experience of the CAR, one of the lessons that can be learned regarding the process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is that DDR should be integrated within the framework of nation-building initiatives. It becomes evident that mere disarmament will fail when there is no guarantee of livelihood opportunities for the former combatants, insecurity still persists within the communities, or the state fails to offer its citizens even basic necessities.

At the same time, CAR illustrates the political complexity of international security assistance. The continued debate concerning the country's arms embargo and national security capacities demonstrates that arms-control policies must balance two potentially competing objectives: preventing weapons proliferation while ensuring that legitimate state institutions possess sufficient capacity to protect civilians. An accelerated “Silencing the Guns” programme must therefore distinguish between legitimate state security capabilities and uncontrolled or illicit arms accumulation.

Sierra Leone and the importance of peaceful political competition

In addition, another significant contrast lies within the experience of Sierra Leone, where democracy is seen as a means that prevents political disputes from escalating into violent conflicts. There has been no shortage of peaceful transfer of power after the end of the civil war in Sierra Leone despite the issues facing the nation's electoral processes and governance structures. The African Peer Review Mechanism has acknowledged repeated peaceful transfers of power in Sierra Leone as an achievement towards democratization and constitutionalism.

With respect to “Silencing the Guns,” this indicates that the initiative has to be recognized as an element of good governance as well. Competitive politics can be prevented from evolving into physical conflict via processes like fair elections, constitution-making, autonomous state institutions, security apparatuses that can be held liable, judiciaries, and mechanisms of resolving political disputes. As a result, the AU does not need to isolate its peace and security agenda from its governance agenda since both concepts cannot operate independently from each other.

TOPIC B: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Although the African Union has developed robust peace and security architectures, what then makes it difficult for Africa to implement its "Silencing the Guns" campaign? Despite Africa having made substantial progress through this initiative, why do Africa's Member States continue failing to actualize AU resolutions on reducing armed conflict?

- With the existence of mechanisms such as the Peace and Security Council, Continental Early Warning System, Panel of the Wise, African Standby Force, and the Peace Fund within the structure of the African Union, how is it possible that conflict escalation occurs prior to the execution of preventative actions through these instruments? What must be done to address this issue within the AU?

- Why, despite having signed peace agreements and participated in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, have several conflicts been unable to achieve lasting peace? Why have ex-combatants failed at successful social integration, and how should the AU respond to the conditions that facilitate renewed militarisation?

- Given that the deadline set in the initial Silencing the Guns campaign for 2020 had already expired, how feasible would it be for the African Union to meet this same goal by 2030? What transformative changes should be instituted by the African Union that will ensure the achievement of this ambitious target, especially concerning sustainable funding, effective governance, representation of women and young people, and setting appropriate indicators for assessing the level of sustainable peace in Africa?

UN PAST ACTIONS

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 2457 - 2019
    - Resolution 2457 (2019), adopted unanimously by the United Nations Security Council on 27 February 2019, was among the most explicit endorsements of the African Union's 'Silencing the Guns' agenda by the body. The resolution highlighted the shared goals between the two organizations in relation to conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution in Africa. It also acknowledged the requirement to focus on the underlying reasons for the persistence of conflict and violence. In addition, the resolution stressed the importance of tackling issues like terrorism and organized transnational crimes while curbing the movement of weapons across the continent. Critically, this was not limited to merely military means as emphasized by Resolution 2457: it included references to inclusive governance, economic and social development, respect for human rights, as well as gender inclusion during peace process negotiations. Thus, the resolution created precedence for viewing the AU campaign as a collective undertaking by both parties.
- UN–AU partnership in Somalia through AMISOM - 2007
    - The second precedent that highlights the UN-AU cooperation towards solving conflicts within Somalia via AMISOM has become an exemplary case study. Through Security Council Resolution 1744 of 2007, the United Nations authorized the deployment of AMISOM under Chapter VII powers. The mandate of AMISOM involved supporting political processes and reconciliation in Somalia as well as developing its national security infrastructure. The Security Council also made exceptions regarding the lifting of the embargo on military supplies exclusively reserved for the AU-led mission, alongside assisting in establishing the national military apparatus. As time progressed, the mission succeeded in protecting key populations, assisting the government of Somalia in regaining control and fighting off the militants from Al-Shabaab. Thus, AMISOM illustrates the effectiveness of a mandated peacekeeping intervention by the UN along with an AU-led mission. Nevertheless, peace is contingent upon functional state institutions and reconciliation.

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