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AFRICAN UNION AND PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: CIVILIANS' PROTECTION PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Promotion of peace, security and stability on the African continent remain one of the major objectives of the African Union. To achieve this objective, African Union has engaged in peace support operations in conflict-torn regions in Africa. However, it has been acknowledged in literature that civilians are the major victims of contemporary intra-state conflicts in Africa. The challenges of armed conflict for civilians is dire, ranging from loss of life, property, degrading and inhuman treatment, among others. Given the negative impact of conflicts on the civilian population in Africa, this paper seeks to examine African Union Peace Support Operations in Africa and the mechanisms put in place for protection of civilians. Basically, this paper is an attempt to examine the extent to which the challenges and protection of civilians (POC) has been integrated into the peace support operations of the African Union.

KEYWORDS: *peace, security and stability, economic development, human rights*

INTRODUCTION

One of the key objectives of the African Union remains the promotion of peace, security and stability on the African continent. Given incessant conflicts that ravaged Africa in the between the 1960s and 1990s, and the inability of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to curtail the conflicts, there was hope that the birth of African Union (AU) in 2002 would bring the desired peace, security and stability in Africa. For instance, according to Ahmadou (2007), the adoption of unconditional position on non-interference made OAU to become ineffective in the promotion and protection of human rights in a decolonised and free Africa (Ahmadou, 2007). Such

challenges that confronted OAU, among others, led to the search for a new or transformed organisation with new laws, rules and mechanisms of operations that will bring Africa 'out of the mess', and make its dream of unified, developed and peaceful Africa a reality. Thus, one of the motives for the formation of the AU in July 2002 was the realization that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of development and integration agenda (Okumu and Jaye, 2010).

At its inception, African Union continued from where OAU stopped in peace operations.¹ From Democratic Republic of Congo to Burundi, Somalia, and Sudan, African Union peacekeeping missions were deployed. The AU deployed around 15,000 troops as part of large-scale peace operations to four states: Burundi (2003-2004, 2007-2008); Sudan (2004-2007); the Comoros (2006, 2007, 2008) and Somalia, 2007-present (Williams 2009a). As enshrined in its Constitutive Act, Article 4(h) affords the African Union the right to forcibly intervene in one of its member states in 'grave circumstances', namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

Nonetheless, the plight of civilians in armed conflict remains dire despite African Union's intervention. Civilians have suffered immensely in armed conflict that has even led to so many killings and maiming of persons as well as inhuman and degrading treatments for women. For instance, since 1990, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program has recorded the massacres of over 570,000 civilians in 27 African countries (cited in Williams, 2010). UN estimated that 300,000 Darfuris died and more than 2 million are internally displaced (cited in Fleshman, 2010), following the Darfur conflict. Most contemporary wars in Africa have been intra-state conflicts where civilians constitute the overwhelming majority of the victims and targeting them has become a primary objective of the warring parties (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012).

What is more, the heavy toll of civilians' death and plights they undergo during armed conflict makes their protection an issue to be given adequate consideration. Armed conflicts are not only the theatres of the widespread abuse and violation of human rights; they are often the consequences of these (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012). Ordinarily, 'civilians have been the main victims as a result of the humanitarian and security situation' (Aning and Salihu, 2012), during conflict. Thus, it becomes imperative to protect the armed-less and innocent civilians from the devastating impacts of conflicts. What role is the African Union peace support operation playing concerning the protection of civilians during conflict? As Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi (2012), the

protection of civilians is essential to the success of a peace mission and to the peacekeepers' legitimacy and credibility. Civilian protection is a crucial part of forging durable political settlements because any peace agreement that tolerates continued violence against civilians will not provide a solid foundation on which to build legitimate governance structures (Williams, 2010).

Given the importance of protection of civilian to the success of any embarked peace operations, this paper sets out to examine African Union and its peace support operations with regards to the protection of civilians. The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 examines the concept of protection of civilians (POC) as used in this context. Section 3 deals with the African Union peace Operations in Africa, and POC. Section 4 discusses the importance of POC in African peace operations. Section 5 is the conclusion and recommendations.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The concept of 'protection of civilians' as put forward in the African Union Draft Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians (POC) includes activities undertaken to improve the security of the population and people at risk and to ensure the full respect for the rights of groups and the individual recognised under regional instruments including the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, and the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and international law, including humanitarian, human rights and refugee law (African Union, 2010). Clearly, the Draft Guidelines stated that 'POC in a peace support mission requires a multi-dimensional and coordinated approach with clear and differentiated responsibilities for military, police and civilian components, which recognises the protection activities of host State authorities, civilian populations, and external protection actors' (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012).

The protection of civilians is viewed in a broad and all-encompassing perspective that goes beyond peace support operations to include international humanitarian law, human rights, humanitarian action, legal protection and gender issues (Carvalho and Stensland, 2012). Protection of civilians has come to be seen as the essence of peacekeeping operations; it has emerged as a fundamental justification for military and humanitarian intervention during conflicts (Afenó, 2012). Thus, 'the effective protection of civilians has become a critical issue in peacekeeping operations in Africa where civilians are the main victims in most of the violent conflicts

¹ Peace operations used here refer to the whole spectrum of operation authorised by the United Nations to monitor ceasefire agreements and/or support the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreements, including those aspects of peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction.

devastating the continent' (Afen, 2012). In the UN Human Rights Resolution, 2005/63 on Protection of the Human rights of Civilians in Armed Conflict, article 2 urged all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population, and also urges all States to comply with their human rights obligations in this context (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2005).

Essentially, civilian protection is a broad concept that is not limited only to physical protection; it involves various security needs for the civilians, including a secure environment (Afen, 2012).

AFRICAN UNION PEACE OPERATIONS AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The ability of peace support operations to ensure the protection of civilians is closely linked with their legitimacy and credibility (African Union, 2010). With the establishment of African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces in 2003, peacekeeping in Africa is no longer the sole prerogative and responsibility of the United Nations (Okumu and Jaye, 2010). AU peace operations have put AU at the centre of managing and resolving African conflicts (Okumu and Jaye, 2010). The AU Constitutive Act identifies one of its main principles in relation to the protection of civilians when it states the 'right of the union to intervene in a member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity (Carvalho and Stensland, 2012).

Over the past decade, AU has undertaken major peace operations of its own- in Burundi, Sudan and Somalia-involving approximately 14,000 peacekeepers at a total cost of some \$1.3 billion (Coning, 2010). The AU's peace operations have ranged from small observer missions to missions involving over seven thousand troops in Sudan and Somalia (Williams, 2011). The African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) had approximately 8,000 personnel and its budget for 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 was approximately US\$466 million; the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) had approximately 3,335 personnel and its budget for 2004 was approximately US\$ 134 million (Coning, 2010). Starting from 2003, AU peace operations, main troop contributors and main tasks assigned to Missions are shown in the Table below.

African Union's Peace Operations, 2003-June 2011

Mission	Location	Duration	Size (approximate maximum)	Main Troop Contributors	Main Task (s)
AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	Burundi	2003-2004	3, 250	South Africa	Peacebuilding
AU Military Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC)	Comoros	2004	41	South Africa	Observation
AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS)	Darfur	2004-2007	7,700	Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, Ghana	Peacebuilding/Civilian Protection
Special Task Force Burundi	Burundi	2006-2009	750	South Africa	VIP Protection
AU Mission for support to the Election in Comoros (AMISEC)	Comoros	2006	1,260	South Africa	Election Monitor
AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	Mogadishu	2007-present	9,000	Uganda, Burundi	Regime Support
AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES)	Comoros	2007-2008	350	South Africa	Election Support
Democracy in Comoros	Comoros	2008	1,350 (+450 Comoros)	Tanzania	Enforcement
AU-UN hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (UN pays)	Darfur	2008-present	c.23,000	Sudan	Peacebuilding/Civilian Protection

Source: Williams (2011), 'African Union Conflict Management Capabilities', Working Paper

The AU has, since 2003, deployed peace support operations in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB); in Sudan, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS); in Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); in Comoros, the African Union Electoral Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES) and the AU-UN hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The 2003 AU peace operation in Burundi, known as the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), was the first operation wholly initiated, planned and executed by

AU members (Murithi, 2008). The AMIB operation was to supervise, observe, monitor and verify the implementation of a ceasefire agreement which had been signed in August 2000, and to promote the consolidation of peace in Burundi (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). Among the tasks of the AU force in Burundi were to protect returning politicians who would take part in the transitional government and secure demobilisation centres and improving the ability of AMIB to reintegrate former militia into society (Murithi, 2008). The operations in Burundi were

deployed following large-scale human rights violations and violence directed towards the civilian population. The protection of civilians was therefore a major concern to the African Union in Burundi, but still, no protection of civilians mandate was provided to its operations (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). AMIB was designed mainly to guarantee the physical safety of the political leadership, and not that of the population at large (Kjeksrud et al, 2011).

In the case of Darfur conflict, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), was deployed in August 2004 and was tasked with monitoring and supporting the implementation of the ceasefire agreement that was signed in April 2004. Initially, AMIS did not have a protection mandate, and was mandated only to observe violations of the ceasefire agreement but with the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Darfur, AMIS received a protection mandate² (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). The AMIS mandate was an improvement, in that the peacekeepers were, under Article 9 and 10 given some powers to be 'prepared to protect civilians under imminent threat in the immediate vicinity, within means and capabilities in accordance with the rules of engagement (Birikorang, 2005). The AU mission was only mandated to 'protect civilians which it encountered in its immediate vicinity under imminent threat, with the understanding that the protection of the civilian population remained the responsibility of the Government of Sudan' (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). Though the civilian protection mandate for the AMIS was an improvement from the AMIB, the fact that protection of civilian population was still seen as the responsibility of the Government of Sudan made the implementation of such mandate difficult. Moreover, Kjeksrud et al (2011) was quick to point that 'AMIS was not provided with a more robust protection mandate, and no protection strategy was developed to implement the mandate.

Despite the shortcoming of the mandate, 'AMIS did implement physical protection activities, designed and carried out by the military component of the mission, undertaking such activities as protection of internally displaced person (IDP) camps, the conduct of fire-wood patrols, protection of market

places and wells, the patrol of migration routes on a seasonal basis, and other activities designed to protect civilians at risk (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was deployed in March 2007, and was tasked with supporting dialogue and reconciliation by assisting with the free movement, safe passage and protection of all stakeholders involved in a national reconciliation congress. While initially mandated with a force strength of 8000 peacekeepers, by 2011 this was increased to a force of 12,000, given the deteriorating security situation in Somalia (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). In May 2011 the Peace and Security Council instructed the AU Commission to mainstream the Draft Guidelines on the Protection of Civilians into the work of AMISOM. In September 2011 the United Nations Security Council welcomed the progress made by AMISOM to reduce civilian casualties, urged the mission to continue in its efforts to prevent civilian casualties, and encouraged the AU to develop an effective approach to the protection of civilians in the mission, in line with the decisions of the Peace and Security Council. Since that time, significant progress has been achieved in mainstreaming protection of civilians considerations into the work of AMISOM (Kjeksrud et al, 2011).

In 2007, the UN-AU hybrid (UNAMID) operation was deployed in Darfur with a protection mandate for civilian population. At full strength it is set to have 26,000 military, police and civilian personnel making the largest peacekeeping Mission in the world (The Darfur Consortium, 2008). UNAMID was authorised by a United Nations Chapter VII mandate to protect civilians (The Darfur Consortium, 2008). To date, only AMIS and UNAMID held an explicit mandate for the protection of civilians in their areas of operations.

Given the lack of protection mandate by AU missions in relation to the protection of civilians, as well as enormous risks faced by civilian population in armed conflicts, the AU Commission in 2010 developed Draft Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations. These draft guidelines were developed to provide guidance at the strategic level, and are intended to assist in the formulation of guidance at both the operational and the tactical levels (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). The African Union Draft Guidelines for the protection of civilians by Peace Support Operations gave the POC agenda important momentum within the AU.

From the AU Draft Guidelines, protection of civilians is understood as all the activities undertaken to improve the security of the population and people at

² A protection mandate refers to the sum of all aspects of protection concerns reflected in the mandate of a peace support operation, including physical, legal and other protection tasks aimed at enhancing the level of protection afforded to civilians in the area of operation of the mission.

risk in the area of operations of the mission, and to ensure the full respect for rights of groups and of the individual recognised under regional instruments, including the African Charter of Human and People's Rights, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, and the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, as well as international law, including humanitarian, human rights and refugee law (African Union, 2010).

In the Draft Guidelines, AU adopted a tiered approach to protection of civilians. The tiered approach combines both short-term and long-term approaches to protection, and are intended to provide guidance at both the operational and tactical levels of the AU Missions. The Draft Guidelines cluster protection activities around four pillars of engagement: (1) protection as part of the political process, (2) protection from physical violence, (3) rights-based protection, and (4) the establishment of a protective environment. Protection as part of the political process is crucial to the success of a peace support mission. It lies at the centre of a mission's work to ensure that a State emerging from conflict can establish lasting and sustainable peace. Protection from physical violence is put in four phases: prevention (activities such as patrol undertaken to prevent designing of hostile activities); pre-emption (measures to preclude or defeat an imminent threat such as tactical redeployment of troops); response (proportionate use of force to neutralise or render ineffective a spoiler group after the outbreak of an attack, such as self defense); and consolidation (activities necessary to manage a post conflict situation such as DDR activities). The Right based protection involve monitoring and reporting of human rights violations in the Mission area, and the establishment of a secure environment is the peacebuilding dimension to peace operations. The formulation of the AU's four-tiered approach to the protection of civilians, through political process, physical protection, rights based protection and a secure environment has contributed to clarifying the understanding and enhancing the operationalisation of the protection of civilians in the AU context (Carvalho and Stensland, 2012).

Notwithstanding the effort made in developing the Draft Guidelines, the tiered approach still lack clarification on the role of different actors (military, police and civilian components) in peace support operation with regards to civilian protection. This, according to Carvalho and Stensland (2012) bring to the fore operational challenges such as ensuring coordination across sectors and actors, increasing understanding of roles and responsibilities

and creating a shared approach towards implementing and mainstreaming protection within the AU's work. Although AU has developed Guidelines on the protection of civilians, to date no AU mission has developed a protection of civilians' strategy (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). Therefore, the Guidelines have not been utilised to develop protection of civilians approaches or activities at the operational or tactical levels (Kjeksrud et al, 2011). Also, the AU has not identified what protection of civilians activities within the African context are and should be, and also from what and from whom civilians should be protected, since threats can come in various, and even from the peacekeepers, that sometimes engage in sexual assault.

While a number of Africa-led peace support operations included measures (formal or informal) to protect civilians, only the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and UNAMID had an explicit mandate to 'protect civilians whom it encounters under imminent threat and in the immediate vicinity, within resources and capability, it being understood that the protection of the civilian population is the responsibility of the Government of Sudan' (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012). For the AU Mission in Somalia, there is an implied mandate; the Security Council, mindful that AMISOM lacks the necessary capabilities, does not mandate the mission to use all necessary means to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012). The UN Security resolution 2036 (2012), only requires AMISOM to establish an Indirect Fire policy and a Civilian Casualty Tracking Analysis and Response System (CCTAR), with a view to ensuring that the military operations of the mission and those of the forces of the transitional Federal Government (TFG) take into account the protection of civilians and respect for the rights of the vulnerable.

The major challenge faced by AU has been lack of resources to undertake a effective peace support operations (AU has depended on support from UN or the mercy of member states that are sometimes slow to deploy their personnel or lack vital equipments). In the words of Williams (2010) 'it is foolish to expect a great deal of success if peacekeepers are not given sufficient resources.' Member States of the AU have not committed adequate funds for peace operations. 75% of the entire AU budget has been paid by only five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa (Williams 2009b). Moreover the fact that protection of civilian requires the involvement of the host government (which retain the primary responsibility of such protection, and in conflict times may lack the will to protect) makes the already difficult situation intractable. Also, the lack of adequate

training in the protection of civilians for AU Missions is another challenge. As Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi (2012) noted, AU troops and police from contributing countries have limited training in the protection of civilians as a strategic or operational aim. Also, the AU founding document did not mention the concept of civilian protection except the one being developed in the Draft Guidelines.

However, one important development in the AU has been the initiation of the culture of protection of civilians. This is particularly visible in the Draft Guidelines that has been put forward, and is being mainstreamed into the AU peace operations. Also, the AU harmonised doctrine for peace support operations states that ‘the protection of a non-combatant’s basic right to life and dignity is a fundamental element of all peace support operations (Appiah-Mensah and Eklou-Assogbavi, 2012). Moreover, AU has strengthened its focus on protection of civilians within its overall work under the auspices of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA); for example, the meeting of the Peace and Security Council in May 2011 re-emphasised the importance of the protection of civilians, and Council encouraged the Commission to mainstream the protection of civilians into the ‘whole spectrum’ of the APSA (Carvalho and Stensland, 2012).

Nevertheless, AU needs to go beyond the development of just Draft Guidelines to proper and clear implementation in all AU Missions, taking into consideration all the tiered approach.

INTEGRATING THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN AU PEACE OPERATIONS

The protection of civilians has become the yardstick by which the success, legitimacy and credibility of contemporary peace operations in Africa are measured. Civilians are the main victims in armed conflicts; a significant number are targeted during conflict even though they are non-combatants. Worst of all have been infringements against the fundamental rights and liberties of civilians and significant human rights abuses such as enforced disappearances, killings often with genocidal intent, maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence (Aning and Salihu, 2012). The basic aim of humanitarian protection operations is to protect civilians from the abuse of their fundamental rights during times of conflict and emergency (Addison, 2009).

Nearly 600,000 civilians in 27 African countries have been massacred in the past two decades; tens of millions more have been killed in battles, displaced, or perished from indirect causes of such attacks and the continent’s armed conflicts (Williams,

2010). UN estimated that 300,000 Darfuris died and more than 2 million are internally displaced (cited in Fleshman, 2010), following the Darfur conflict. With the heavy toll of deaths and attacks on civilians, then the long-term goal of any protection strategy in Africa must be to deter attacks on civilians. Civilian protection is important because everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of their life and the right not to be tortured, and African Union in accordance with the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and other relevant international instruments such as international human rights law and international humanitarian law has already set out standards for the protection of humans rights of individuals. For many, civilian protection is the very essence of peacekeeping (Williams, 2010).

Thus, failure to protect civilians discredits the very practice of peace operations. It well known that the driving force behind the UN-mandated “responsibility to protect” principle is to protect civilians from human rights abuse. According to international humanitarian law, civilians and even combatants ‘hors de combat’ are entitled to specific protection provide that they are not, or no longer taking part in hostilities. International humanitarian law, *Jus in Bello* requires that civilians must not be the target of physical attack or subjected to acts of violence such as killing, maiming, torture and other forms of ill-treatment (including sexual violence), preventing the provision of medical care, slavery, forced recruitment and hostage taking. Also, United Nations Security Council Resolutions such as Resolution 1265 have made calls on the importance of protecting civilians during armed conflict. Resolution 1265 expressed the council’s “willingness” to consider “appropriate measures” in response “to situations of armed conflict where civilians are being targeted or where humanitarian assistance to civilians is being deliberately obstructed”; called on states to ratify key human rights treaties and work toward ending the “culture of impunity” by prosecuting those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and “serious violations of international humanitarian law”; and further expressed the council’s readiness to explore how peacekeeping mandates might be reframed to afford better protection to endangered civilians. Civilian protection has become critical not only to the legitimacy and success of individual peacekeeping operations but also to the credibility of the entire UN system (Williams, 2010).

More importantly, AU is better placed to lead in the response in peace operations in Africa, given the general notion in ‘the African solution to African problems’ and the fact that the AU is the only

organisation that could offer some physical protection for Africans without having to breach the global rule of non-intervention. Acknowledging the importance of civilians' protection, 'AU-UN high-level meeting in Addis Ababa in November 2006 concluded that civilian security was a prerequisite for progress toward a political solution in Darfur' (Williams, 2010). Taking note of the importance of the protection of civilians to the ongoing work of the AU, the African Union Commission, in February 2011, established a Working Group on the Protection of Civilians, chaired by the Humanitarian Affairs Division in the Political Affairs Department. The formation of the Working Group is in recognition that the protection of civilians in conflict zones is a matter of concern not only to the Peace and Security Department, which is responsible for the planning and conduct of peace support operations, but is also cross-cutting in nature, and is therefore of concern to, and the responsibility of, the Commission as a whole. The first meeting of the Working Group was held on 18 February 2011, and meetings will be held on a regular basis to review the further development and implementation of the Draft Guidelines, and to enhance and strengthen the AU's protection of civilians agenda (African Union, 2010). It is essential for the AU to take on an effective civilian protection role not just for humanitarian reasons but also for the purpose of developing the international legitimacy of its peace and security structure.

Generally, it is said that 'finding remedies for the civilian protection conundrum has far-reaching implications for sustained progress on the continent' (Williams, 2010). The importance of POC is not only being situated within the global effort to strengthen the international humanitarian law and human rights law but also towards achieving sustainable peace and development in the African continent.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is established that the legitimacy and credibility of peace support operations depend on the effective protection of the civilian protection. In many conflicts that have ravaged, and are still ravaging Africa, civilians often pay a heavy price. Civilians face daily threats of violence and death as they find themselves inadvertently caught up in the middle of the conflict. Thus, protection of civilians in armed conflicts is necessary to managing and reducing the direct impact of conflict on affected population. Since 2003 African Union has been engaged in peace support operations from AMIB to AMISOM, AMIS, and UNAMID. What has not been given due consideration in AU peace support operations is the protection of civilians. Currently, only two AU Missions (AMIS and

UNAMID) had explicit mandate to protect civilians. Even with the mandate given to these Missions, AU still faces the challenges of limited resources, funding and inadequate personnel training for full scale operations. The AU Draft Guidelines on the Protection of Civilians in Peace Operations only came into existence in 2010, and full implementation is still lacking, and no civilian protection strategy has been developed for the Missions.

While the development of the Draft Guidelines is a good step in the right direction, AU must include protection of civilians mandate in all its peace support operations and also develop a clear view of the strategy guiding protection activities by its Missions. To give credit to its peace operations in Africa, protection of civilians who bore the heavy brunt of the conflict must be given adequate attention. In order to remedy its shortcomings and ensure effective peace operations, the paper makes the following recommendations. First, AU should make sure there is implementation of the Draft Guidelines on Protection of the Civilians on the field, not just in paper.

Second, AU should make sure its Missions are given sufficient resources to undertake operational and tactical tasks relation to protection of civilians. Third, AU should engage in comprehensive training of its Mission personnel on the rules of engagements, and basic guidelines on the protection of civilians as required. In other words, African peacekeepers need to be better prepared for protection tasks, including better political support and a clear concept for protection (clear mandate, and rules of engagement, ROE). Fourth, AU should make sure that there is regular reporting on how protection issues are being implemented by peace Missions; the report could be every 6 months or before renewal of each mandate. Lastly, it is important protection of civilians becomes a mandated task for peace support operations. In other words, there should be consistent language on protection of civilians in peace support operation mandates.

Clearly, protection of civilians in peace support operations is a critical aspect that cannot be ignored by African Union. To achieve sustainable and credible peace in conflict-torn regions, policies on the protection of civilian population must be pursued and enhanced.

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