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Central African Peace and conflict management architecture

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Abstract

This article provides a critical analysis of the regional peace and security co-operation and conflict managements in Central Africa. Since gaining their independence in the 1960s, Central African states have agreed to strengthen their cooperation at the regional level. Although the initial focus was on regional economic co-operation and trade, growing crises and conflicts in the region led to security issues becoming an important element in regional agreements and activities.

The article analyses the progressive transformation of the agendas of two Central African economic communities, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States, from purely economic matters to the inclusion of peace and conflict management in the sub-region. Particular attention is given to the crises in the Central African Republic, a major context for two regional peace missions, Multinational Force in the Central African Republic and Mission to Consolidate Peace in Central Africa. The article also highlights the terrorist threats by Boko Haram. It also examines Central African peace and security architecture and outlines major peace and conflict management challenges confronting the sub-region.

Keywords: Central Africa, peace, conflict management, ECCAS, FOMAC, African Standby Force, security architecture.

Механізми врегулювання конфліктів у Центральній Африці

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Авторське резюме

Ця стаття присвячена дослідженню сфери безпеки та співробітництву у врегулюванні конфліктів в Центральній Африці. З моменту здобуття незалежності в 1960 р. центральноафриканські держави домоглися зміцнювати співробітництво на регіональному рівні. Початковою метою був розвиток регіонального співробітництва у торгово-економічного галузі, але збільшення криз і конфліктів у регіоні зробили питання безпеки важливим елементом у регіональних угодах і заходах.

У статті аналізується прогресивне перетворення провідних регіональних організацій (Економічного і валютного співтовариства Центральної Африки і Економічного співтовариства держав Центральної Африки), із суто економічних об'єднань на інтеграційні утворення, до сфери компетенції яких було включено вирішення проблем миру та врегулювання конфліктів в субрегіоні. Особлива увага приділяється кризам у Центральноафриканській Республіці, які впливають на дестабілізацію ситуації в усьому регіоні Центральної Африки. Головним завданням двох регіональних миротворчих місій, багатонаціональних сил в Центральноафриканській Республіці і Місії по зміцненню миру в Центральній Африці стало врегулювання ситуації саме в ЦАР. У статті також досліджується спроможність регіональної системи безпеки щодо боротьби з терористичним угрупованням Боко Харам. Розглядаються також проблеми, які виникли під час побудови системи миру й безпеки у Центральній Африці.

Ключові слова: Центральна Африка, мир, врегулювання конфліктів, ЕКОЦАС, СЕМАС, Африканські резервні сили, архітектура безпеки.

Actuality. Central Africa is a core region of the African continent which includes Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda [10]. Middle Africa (as used by the United Nations when categorizing geographic sub-region) is an analogous term that includes Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe. All of the states in the UN sub region of Middle Africa, plus those otherwise commonly reckoned in Central Africa (11 states in total), constitute the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) [10].
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Since its independence in 2011, South Sudan has also been commonly included in the region.

It is very necessary to pay attention to conflict management in Central Africa because of the spread of the Islamist Boko Haram group into Cameroon and Chad, the persistent clashes between the Christians and the Muslims in Central Africa Republic and the present civil unrest in Burundi. Researchers are interested in the security of the Central African region because of the present civil unrest and insecurity in the region. It is very important for researchers to analyze and find ways by which the conflicts can be managed and finally eradicated.

Literature Review. Minister of Security in

Central Africa B. Josue stated that the Central African Republic has been politically unstable since it gained independence in August 13, 1960 and that there have been more than 20 coups or attempted coups committed in the country [2]. Also, Dr. R Tavaresa and Dr. M Schulz wrote about «Measuring the Impact of Regional Organizations on Peace Building». In their work, they discussed the extent to which regional organizations help in peace building in the Central African region [8]. Dr. A Meyer (Assoc. Professor in the Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations) wrote about «Peace and security cooperation in Central Africa». She discussed the different types of security cooperation between countries in the Central African region [7].

Objectives. Central African Peace and Security Architecture will analyze the growing interest by Central African States to promote peace and security initiatives in the Central African region with regards to the ongoing political insecurity in the Central African Republic and the terrorist activities of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. Also, this article aims to critically analyze the mechanism put in place by several African communities such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to improve on peace and security in the Central African sub-region. Also, the article will discuss the role played by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) as the main pillar of the African Union peace and security architecture.

Basic Material. The security threats and dangers in Central Africa are the spread of the Islamist Boko Haram terrorist activities into Cameroon and Chad, the civil unrest in the Central African Republic, Burundi and the populations in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain at risk of attack by the Lord's Resistance Army, which has perpetrated crimes against humanity.

Countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic and Nigeria in the West of Africa has appealed to the international community to help solve the security threats in the region. But due to the insufficient finance to carry on security operations in the region, the security threat is still present in Central Africa [9]. Countries such as France and the US have contributed to the peacekeeping operation in Central Africa. France has deployed troops to the sub-region while US has contributed a lot to support the peacekeeping Operations in Central Africa. U.S. policy responses to the situation in CAR include: humanitarian assistance; support to African and French troops that have deployed to CAR; anticipated contributions to a U.N. peacekeeping operation in CAR began in September 2014; aid for conflict mitigation and peace building; public diplomacy initiatives; an Executive

Order authorizing targeted sanctions [8, p.10].

The US says it will give \$5m (£3.2m) towards a multi-national task force being set up to fight Nigeria's militant Islamist group Boko Haram [5].

The establishment of joint regional security institutions, mechanisms and operations and the conduct of peace and security activities in Central Africa reflect a general trend in the approach to security on the African continent. This trend was mainly prompted by the growing unwillingness of the international community during the 1990s to intervene actively in international conflicts. The major reasons for this reluctance can be found in changing global interests and a new focus by the international community on developments in Asia and Eastern Europe. Moreover, in the case of Africa, the inauspicious US intervention in Somalia heightened the reluctance of Western governments to send their own ground troops to the continent for peacekeeping. An additional explanation in the case of France was the significant change in political personnel that induced comprehensive reform of France's Africa policy [4, p. 32].

As a consequence of this «intervention fatigue» the international community, and first and foremost the United Nations, emphasized the important role and responsibility of regional organizations in conflict management and promoted increased burden-sharing. In this changing context, African states were urged to strengthen their conflict-resolving capacities. The new emphasis on «Africanisation» and «African ownership» initiated a so-called «African Renaissance». The concept of «African solutions to African problems», coined in 1998 by Thabo Mbeki, found expression in the progressive strengthening of the security role of hitherto exclusively economic communities. This development was moreover strengthened by a certain willingness of the international community to support regional security initiatives and operations financially and/or logistically, as long as they were carried out by African regional organizations [8, p. 13].

Several African regional communities, such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and SADC, had set up regional security mechanisms and launched joint operations as early as the 1990s. Following the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the AU in 2002, the AU Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) was officially created in May 2004. The PSC is the central organ in the AU's peace and security architecture. In the declaration of the AU summit of African heads of state, «the establishment of the [PSC] marks an historic watershed in Africa's progress towards resolving its conflicts and the building of a durable peace and security order». The PSC is the standing decision-making organ for the preven-

tion, management and resolution of conflicts. Its main aim is facilitating timely and efficient responses to conflicts and crises in Africa. Besides the PSC, the other pillars of the AU's peace and security architecture are the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and a peace fund [7, p. 44].

The PSC is regionally embedded, with its components supported by bodies and mechanisms in several regional communities. The Panel of the Wise, which advises the PSC and plays a conflict prevention and peacemaking role, is composed of five persons representing the African regions. CEWS and its observation and monitoring centre (Situation Room) work in close cooperation with regional monitoring centre that collect and provide data for analysis and evaluation

As the central peacekeeping instrument, an African Standby Force (ASF) is to conduct African peace operations on the continent. ASF will rely on five standby brigades of 3,000 to 5,000 troops each, to be set up on the regional level in Northern, Eastern, Western, Central and Southern Africa. Headquarters, planning elements and logistics are to be based in the regions [7, p. 31; 1].

In Central Africa, ECCAS's efforts to set up a regional peace and security architecture largely respond to developments on the continental level. Whereas the Central African Early Warning System (MARAC) is one of the pillars of CEWS. The Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (FOMAC) is intended to contribute to the ASF. A memorandum of understanding has been adopted between representatives of the AU and ECCAS, as well as of the other regional communities and organs contributing to the African peace and security architecture. Progress with these regional contributions to African peace and security architecture differs greatly across the continent [2].

In Central Africa, MARAC has been progressively put in place in recent years. Especially since 2007, major capacity-building efforts have been made, notably with the support of the EU. The EU-ECCAS Support Programme for Peace

and Security in Central Africa (PAPS) has been assisting the community to fully develop its capacity to provide regional peace and security. To facilitate MARAC's operations and implementation of operational guidelines elaborated by the ECCAS secretariat, regular workshops have been organized in the ECCAS member states. Examples include those held in September 2007 in Libreville (Gabon) and in December 2007 in Kinshasa (DRC). Since May 2008, MARAC has carried out regular early warning and conflict analyses. Data collection is organized by an observation centre in Libreville and decentralized bureau in member states, of which five have already been created

A persistent problem is the mechanism's weak analytical capacities. This needs to be addressed to ensure that member states can effectively contribute to monitoring the crises, conflicts and conflict risks within the region. Also crucial is the need to guarantee the smooth transfer of data and efficient cooperation between the different elements and levels of MARAC. In other words, the efficiency and speed of the processes to detect risks and respond to threats need to be ensured. Thus, the distribution of responsibilities among actors and centers on the local, national, regional and continental levels must be strengthened. As the function of MARAC is limited to detecting threats and issuing warnings, much apparently depends on the willingness of the states to heed these alerts and react appropriately.

Conclusion. The peace and security architectures of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC), The Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (FOMAC) and the Central African Early-Warning System have all played a great role in bringing limited peace in the Central African Republic and these peace and security mechanisms are also helping in the fight against Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. It is very clear that without these peace and security mechanisms put in place, the Central African Republic would have been in total chaos until this day.

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