FORCE COMMANDERS’ ROUNDTABLE: COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE, COORDINATION, AND CONVERGENCE IN AFRICAN PEACE OPERATIONS

January 9-11, 2024
National Defense University, Lincoln Hall 3210/3212

AGENDA

Roundtable Summary

The peace operations enterprise in Africa stands at a critical juncture. The demand for decisive action to address rising conflict and instability by the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and other regional actors has arguably never been greater. Nevertheless, regional actors and institutions are struggling to meet this demand. Due to a divided UN Security Council and concerns about their effectiveness, UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions are on the decline. African-led peace operations are becoming increasingly central to managing Africa’s conflicts, but often lack capabilities, are poorly integrated into civilian-led conflict mitigation efforts and are not well-aligned with the broader global peace operations architecture.

This roundtable will address the challenges of advancing the continent’s peace and security architecture to meet rising threats, and fostering effective, locally owned, and sustainable peace operations capacity within Africa. The agenda includes briefings with moderated feedback and reaction periods, group discussions, and a session hosted by the Department of State to offer force commanders, peace operations leaders, and U.S. government officials currently involved in shaping U.S. policy on peace operations the opportunity to have an open exchange of views. Sessions will focus on generating lessons learned, commonalities, and differences across experiences in leading peacekeeping missions in Africa to support coordinated, innovative approaches to the peacekeeping challenges facing the continent today.

The roundtable objectives are as follows:

1. Convene former force commanders and other senior peace operations leaders to exchange experiences, views, lessons learned, and good practices in peace operations in Africa.
2. Informed by examples of successful operations, generate ideas to advance and revitalize the doctrine, partnerships, cooperation mechanisms, and financing underlying Africa’s peace and security architecture.
3. Provide an opportunity for senior U.S. policymakers to engage in dialogue with strategic African leaders on how the U.S. can help support and advance Africa’s peace operations architecture.
January 9  Day 1: AU/UN Roles and Responsibilities

0900-0945  INTRODUCTION AND WELCOMING REMARKS

Ms. Amanda Dory,  Director, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

Dr. Nate Allen,  Associate Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

0945-1030  KEYNOTE

General Birame Diop,  United Nations Military Advisor

Moderator:  Dr. Assis Malaquias,  Academic Dean, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

1030–1100  Break and Group Photo

1100–1230  SESSION 1: PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING AHEAD

Panelists:  Dr. Paul Williams,  Professor of International Affairs, George Washington University

Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga,  Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to the African Union

Moderator:  Dr. Nate Allen,  Associate Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

1230–1330  Lunch

1330–1500  SESSION 2: LESSONS LEARNED IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL PEACE OPERATIONS

Panelists:  Lieutenant General (Ret.) Dr. Dennis Gyllensporre,  Professor of Security Policy, Swedish Defense University and Former Force Commander, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission in Mali

Major General Diomède Ndegeya,  Senior Advisor to the Minister of Defense of Burundi and Former Force Commander, African Union Mission in Somalia

Moderator:  Dr. Joel Amegboh,  Associate Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

1500–1530  Break

1530–1700  SESSION 3: AU-UN PARTNERED PEACE OPERATIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE AU-UN RELATIONSHIP
Panelists:  **Ms. Karin Landgren**, Executive Director, Security Council Report and former Special Representative of the Secretary General for Liberia and Head of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**Ambassador Michele Sison**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**General (Ret.) Martin Luther Agwai**, Former Force Commander, United Nations-African Union Mission and Chief of Defense Staff, Republic of Nigeria

Moderator:  **Mr. James Merz**, Director, Office of Peacekeeping Operations, Bureau of International Organizations, U.S. Department of State

**January 10  Day 2: Regional Roles and Responsibilities**

**0900-1030**  **SESSION 4: THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (REC)-LED PEACE ENFORCEMENT**

Panelists: **Brigadier General Magatte Ndiaye**, Inspector of Arms and Operations, General Inspection of the Senegalese Armed Forces and Former Force Commander, ECOWAS Intervention in the Gambia

**His Excellency Ambassador Professor Mpho Molomo**, Head of Mission, Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique

Moderator:  **Dr. Nate Allen**, Associate Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

**1030–1100**  Break

**1100–1230**  **SESSION 5: AD-HOC SECURITY INITIATIVES AND COORDINATION TO COUNTER CROSS-BORDER INSURGENCIES**

Panelists: **Major General Abdul Khalifah (AK) Ibrahim**, Former Force Commander, Multi National Joint Task Force

**Major General Oumar Bikimo**, Former Force Commander, G5 Sahel Joint Force in Mali


Moderator:  **Dr. Daisy Muibu**, Associate Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

**1230–1330**  Lunch
1330–1430  Transport to Offsite

1430–1630  **ROUNDTABLE: U.S. SUPPORT FOR PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**Introduction:** Ambassador Michele Sison, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**Panelists:** The Honorable Josh Black, Special Assistant to the President and Director of Multilateral Affairs, National Security Council

Ms. Melanie Higgins, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Bureau of African Affairs

Dr. Rachel Schiller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Programs and Operations, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Mr. James Saenz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Stabilization Policy, U.S. Department of Defense

**Moderator:** Ms. Amanda Dory, Director, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

1630–1800  **RECEPTION AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

---

**January 11  Day 3: Coordination within African Peace Operations**

0900–1030  **SESSION 7: COORDINATION OF PEACE OPERATION COMPONENTS AND CAPABILITIES**

**Panelists:** General (Ret.) Derrick Mbuyiselo Mgwebi, Former Force Commander, UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Director of Joint Operations, Republic of South Africa

General (Ret.) Osman Nour Soubagle, Former Force Commander of the African Union Mission in Somalia, and Chief of Defense Staff, Republic of Djibouti

Ms. Jennifer Pulliam, Peace Operations Capacity Building Division Chief, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State

**Moderator:** Mr. Herbert Loret, Team Leader, UN Light Coordination Mechanism
1030–1100  Break

1100–1230  **SESSION 8: INTEGRATING AFRICAN PEACE OPERATIONS WITH CIVILIAN-LED CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**Panelists:**  **Brigadier General Joyce Sitienei**, Director, Kenya Peace Operations Training Center

**General (Ret.) Balla Keita**, Former Force Commander, United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

**Dr. Jide Okeke**, Regional Coordinator for Africa, United Nations Development Program

**Moderator:**  **Dr. Catherine Lena Kelly**, Associate Dean and Professor, Africa Center for Strategic Studies

1230–1330  Lunch

1330–1500  **GROUP DISCUSSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING PEACE OPERATIONS IN AFRICA**

1500–1530  Break

1530–1630  **CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS**