Regional Economic Communities and Security Initiatives in Africa: The Cases of ECOWAS, ECCAS, and SADC*

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Introduction

The African Union (AU), a regional organisation that encompasses Africa, divides the continent into five regions (Northern, Eastern, Western, Central, and Southern), and officially recognises eight regional organisations as Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that form the basis of the African Economic Community (AEC). In Africa, not only the AU but also these RECs have actively developed regional security initiatives, in addition to their original objective of economic integration [Bach 2016: 88-94].

This article will examine the case of three RECs that have run proactive initiatives in the realm of regional security, and give a general outline of their Regional Security Mechanism (RSM) establishment and Peace Support Operations (PSO) development.

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1. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Regional Security Mechanism
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional organisation founded in 1975 to promote cooperation and development in economic activity and sociocultural matters in West Africa.

ECOWAS was originally founded as an economic cooperative body, but as early as 1976, the year after its foundation, Nigeria and Togo proposed entering into a defence pact with other member states. ECOWAS member states signed the Protocol on Non-Aggression in 1978 and the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence in 1981 (See Table 1).

ECOWAS began to develop an RSM in earnest after the end of the Cold War, in the 1990s. Then, in December 1999, ECOWAS adopted an RSM establishment agreement called the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping, and Security.

The ECOWAS's RSM is called the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping, and Security (MCPMRPS). According to the MCPMRPS Protocol, the objectives of the mechanism include the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts within and between member states, the preservation and reinforcement of peace, security, and stability within the community, and the regulation of humanitarian aid (Article 3). The mechanism primarily comprises (1) the Authority of
Heads of State and Government (AHSG), (2) the Mediation and Security Council (MSC), and (3) the ECOWAS Commission (Article 4).

AHSG is the highest decision-making body of the mechanism, and is able to make decisions on all matters related to the mechanism. However, it delegates authority to MSC as necessary (Articles 6-7).

MSC consists of a total of nine countries: seven selected by AHSG, plus the present and former AHSG chair countries. It makes decisions on matters related to peace and security in West Africa. MSC's voting is determined by a majority rule of at least two-thirds, and specific deliberations are carried out at three levels: the head of state level, the ministerial level, and the ambassador level (Articles 8-14).

The ECOWAS Commission is the executive branch of ECOWAS and is controlled by the President. The President of this commission has the authority to take an action for conflict response and security matters (Article 15).

Moreover, as a subsidiary body for supporting these institutions, the MCPMRPS Protocol also determines the establishment and functions of the Defence and Security Commission (DSC), which consists of chiefs of defence staff of the member states, and the Council of Elders (CE), composed of veteran politicians and administrators (Articles 17-22).

Furthermore, the protocol also determines the establishment of the Early Warning System (EWS), whose main purpose is conflict prevention (Articles 23-24), and today it is generally called the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN). In
ECOWARN, member states are divided into four Observation and Monitoring Zones (OMZ), and one Zonal Bureau (ZB) is positioned in each OMZ. In Abuja, Nigeria, where the ECOWAS Commission is based, there is also the Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC).

In 2008, ECOWAS adopted a foundational document called the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, which deepened the conflict prevention realm in the MCPMRPS.

**Peace Support Operations**

Of the eight RECs officially recognised by the AU, ECOWAS can be said to be the organisation that has most proactively developed PSO. When a conflict broke out in Liberia in December 1989, ECOWAS, under the leadership of regional power Nigeria, established an independent military organisation called ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and deployed it to the conflict area. ECOMOG greatly overstepped the neutral role it had assumed at the beginning immediately after the intervention, effectively engaging as a party in the battle against anti-government armed insurgents. However, the antagonism between ECOMOG, which had become a party in the conflict, and anti-government armed insurgents gradually eased after seven years of combat, and ECOMOG completely withdrew from Liberia until 1998. With this deployment in Liberia as a start, ECOWAS expanded ECOMOG into Sierra Leone from 1997 to 2000, and to Guinea Bissau from 1998 to 1999. Furthermore, in the previously mentioned MCPMRPS Protocol, ECOMOG was positioned as an official subsidiary body of the mechanism (Article 17).
Table 1. Regional Security Initiatives of ECOWAS, ECCAS, and SADC (As of August 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Organs relating to Regional Security</th>
<th>Early Warning System</th>
<th>Main Instruments (Year of Adoption)</th>
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</table>
- ECOWAS Revised Treaty (1993)  
- Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa (1998)  
- Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCEASD) (1999)  
- Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)  
- ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (2014)  
| Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) | Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Rwanda (11) | Conference des Chefs d'État  
Commission de défense et de sécurité (CDS)  
ECCAS Standby Force (FOMAC)  
Bureau National (BN)  
Decentralised Correspondent (DC)  
Inter-regional Coordination Center (ICC)  
Centre Régional de la Sécurité Maritime de l'Afrique Centrale (CRESMAO)  
Multinational Maritime Coordination Center (MMCC)  
- Mutual Assistance Pact between the member states of the ECCAS (2000)  
- Declaration of Yaoundé by Member States of the COPAX on the Fight against the Terrorist Group Boko Haram (2015)  
| Southern African Development Community (SADC) | Angola, Botswana, Comoros, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe (16) | Summit of Heads of State and Government  
Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SADC Organ)  
SADC Organ Troika  
Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO)  
Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC)  
Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISSDC)  
Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC)  
SADC Standby Force (SSF)  
Mediation Reference Group (MRG)  
Panel of Elders (PeE)  
Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO)  
Secretariat (Gaborone) | Regional Early Warning Center (REWC) | - SADC Treaty and Declaration (1992)  
- Protocol on Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking (1996)  
- Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Material in the Southern African Development Community Region (2001)  
- Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) (2003)  
- Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) (2004)  
- Memorandum of Understanding amongst the SADC Member States on the Establishment of a SADC Standby Force (2007)  
- Revised Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO II) (2010)  
However, with the start of the 2000s, when the initiative for the African Standby Force (ASF) was promoted under the AU, ECOWAS stopped using the name ECOMOG, and proceeded with preparations under the name ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) instead. Then, PSO began to be developed that did not use the name ECOMOG: the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI) in 2003–2004, the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) in 2003, and the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) from 2012 to 2017.

Furthermore, when chaos resulted from the presidential election in the Gambia in December 2016, ECOWAS deployed the ECOWAS Mission in the Gambia (ECOMIG) as ESF in January 2017 to remove President Yahya Jammeh, who did not accept the result of the election.

**New Security Challenges**

One of the major security issues that ECOWAS is confronting in recent years is terrorism. For example, the Islamist organisation al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), founded in Algeria, participated in an armed uprising in Mali in 2012, and gained effective control of the northern part of that country for a short time. Then, although the group’s influence was weakened by the French military’s search-and-destroy operations, it has advanced into not only Mali but also Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire, and launched attacks on hotels and other places. Furthermore, in northern Nigeria, and particularly since the start of the 2010s, the Islamist armed organisation Boko Haram (meaning ‘Western
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education is a sin) has launched frequent acts of terrorism, including attacks, kidnappings, and suicide bombings.

In response to this, ECOWAS attempted to dispatch the PSO force Mission de la CEDEAO au Mali (MICEMA) into the Mali conflict in 2012, but because of the Malian interim government’s opposition to receiving this force, and the inability to secure funding for the deployment, the expansion was abandoned [Tejpar and de Albuquerque 2015]. Regarding Boko Haram, ECOWAS was unable to develop PSO because Nigeria, proud of its position as a regional power, did not wish for an intervention by ECOWAS. In this way, while terrorism is a serious security issue in West Africa today, ECOWAS has not been able to sufficiently address it. Although the Lomé Declaration on Peace, Security, Stability, and the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism was adopted at the ECOWAS summit meeting in July 2018 and the position of battling terrorism and extremism was strongly declared, at this point there have still not been any indications that ECOWAS is playing a leading role in anti-terrorism measures in West Africa.

Furthermore, in recent years, ECOWAS has been reinforcing regional initiatives for maritime security. Because ECOWAS member states have weak maritime defence abilities in general, there have until now been rampant pirating, smuggling, and poaching in the seas adjacent to this region. In the face of this issue, ECOWAS adopted the ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (ElMS) in March 2014, and declared that it would strengthen maritime governance. Since then, while receiving support from donors, ECOWAS divided the ocean areas of its member states into
three zones based on EIMS. It moved preparations forward for setting up a Multinational Maritime Coordination Centre (MMCC) in each zone, and the Centre Régional de Sécurité Maritime de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (CRESMAO) to unify the MMCCs in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. As of March 2015, the first MMCC opened in Cotonou, Benin.3

In addition, in the 2010s, the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) was introduced with support from the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) to help the ECOWAS member states share information with one another about the international crimes of drug and weapon smuggling, and about the international migration of terrorists.

2. Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

Regional Security Mechanism
The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is an economic cooperative body founded in 1983, centred on the member states of the Union douanière et économique de l’Afrique Centrale (UDEAC) and the Communauté économique des pays des grands lacs (CEPGL).

Due to the lack of payment of contributions from member states and discord between heads of state, ECCAS has not been very functional since its establishment. With the start of the 1990s, there were more issues of growing political instability and sudden conflicts in member states, and by 1992 ECCAS fell into a state of nearly
complete shutdown. However, at the extraordinary summit meeting held in February 1998, a decision was made to restore ECCAS, and subsequently, the organisation was recognised as the only REC in Central Africa. Nevertheless, compared with ECOWAS, ECCAS is rather weak as an organisation, and is more of a 'leader forum' than a regional organisation. ECCAS has a standing office called the Secrétariat Général, headquartered in Libreville, Gabon. However, unlike the ECOWAS Commission, the scope and function of the ECCAS Secrétariat Général are limited. Furthermore, many ECCAS member states are also redundantly members of other regional organisations, and thus ECCAS's cohesiveness and unity as an organisation are by no means strong.

However, after the so-called 'hibernation' of the 1990s, the most proactive activity expansion of the restored ECCAS has been in the realm of peace and security. For example, in 1999, constructing regional peace and security capabilities was positioned as one of ECCAS's four top priorities [Meyer 2015: 3] and the Conseil de Paix et de Sécurité de l'Afrique Centrale (COPAX) was established as an RSM in Central Africa. Then, in February 2000, le protocole relatif au Conseil de paix et de sécurité (COPAX) was adopted among the ECCAS member states.

According to the protocol, the objectives of COPAX include the prevention and control of conflict, and the promotion of cooperation for defence and security (Article 4). It mainly comprises (1) the Conférence des Chefs d'État, (2) the Conseil des ministres, (3) the Commission de défense et de sécurité (CDS), and (4) the Secrétariat Général (Article 7). The Conférence des Chefs d'État is COPAX's
highest decision-making body, and the Conseil des ministres, which comprises foreign ministers and defence ministers, executes the decisions of the Conférence des Chefs d'État. The CDS, with chiefs of defence staff as members, assists the ministerial council (Articles 8-14).

In the protocol, it was also agreed that the Mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique Centrale (MARAC) would be established to collect information about conflicts and humanitarian crises (Article 21). MARAC is a mechanism that collects and analyses information related to conflicts through its Bureau National (BN), a network within each member state consisting of government agencies, international organisations, NGOs, and research institutions, and approximately three Decentralised Correspondents (DCs) in each country, who give reports based on personal qualifications. However, although MARAC began some activities in 2007, given a shortage of personnel and funding, and a passive stance on the part of national governments toward sharing information about their own country's problems with other countries, it has been pointed out that it is doubtful whether the institution is functioning in any substantive way today [Ingerstad and Lindell 2015; Meyer 2015: 6-9].

The COPAX Protocol also decided the establishment of the Force multinationale de l'Afrique Centrale (FOMAC) (Articles 23-26). After that, FOMAC has been positioned as a standby brigade in Central Africa in the scheme of ASF. In 2006, the establishment of the ECCAS Standby Force (FOMAC) was agreed on. Planning Element (PLANELM). FOMAC's standing secretariat, is headquartered in Libreville.
**Peace Support Operations**

Since the 1990s, ECCAS has shown some limited progress regarding the preparation of the organisational aspects of an RSM. However, despite the numerous conflicts that have occurred in Central Africa, ECCAS as a regional organisation has experienced vulnerability and antagonism between member states, and has been almost completely unable to develop PSO similar to those developed by ECOWAS. The nearly sole exception was its intervention in the Central African Republic (CAR).

In 2002, the domestic political situation in the CAR deteriorated rapidly, and in response, the regional organisation Communauté économique et monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale (CEMAC) deployed the Force multinationale en Centrafrique (FOMUC). CEMAC’s establishment was agreed on in 1994, but that community was the successor organisation of UDEAC, which originated in the colonial era. In that sense, CEMAC had a substantially longer history as a regional organisation than ECCAS, which was founded in 1983; CEMAC had strong organisational cohesiveness and legitimacy. Furthermore, all the CEMAC member states were also members of ECCAS, but at the time, ECCAS had just been restored from its ‘hibernation’ period, and was in no position to be able to develop its own PSO. Accordingly, the Francophone nations of Central Africa such as Gabon and Chad chose the path of armed intervention in the CAR through CEMAC rather than through ECCAS.

Next, for about six years, although FOMUC developed activities with aid from France and the European Union (EU), the CAR effectively fell into a state of collapse because of multiple anti-
government armed insurgent groups battling with one another across more than half of the nation's territory. In July 2008, ECCAS deployed the Mission de consolidation de la paix en Centrafrique (MICOPAX) in the CAR, taking over the operation of FOMUC [Meyer 2011: 21-22]. However, because MICOPAX also only had 700 personnel, its PSO was largely unable to contribute to improving the situation, and it let Séléka, an Islamic anti-government armed group, gain control of the capital Bangui in 2013. In response, ECCAS increased MICOPAX's personnel to 2,000 and tried to somehow restore public order and bring disarmament, but the Christian armed group Antibalaka formed and started raids and massacres of Muslims; the situation seemed to be a serious disaster. Given this state of affairs, France staged an armed intervention in the CAR in December 2013. That same month, fearing that the situation would worsen if left to ECCAS, the AU deployed a 5,500-strong African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) to take over the operation of MICOPAX, while continuing to receive support from the French military. Then, in 2014, MISCA handed over its responsibilities to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

Thus, MICOPAX, which is almost the only PSO carried out by ECCAS, actually ended in failure, hardly contributing to conflict resolution in the CAR, much like FOMUC by CEMAC. However, because of FOMUC's failure, CEMAC withdrew from the realm of peace and security, and focused its activities on the realm of economic and monetary cooperation. In contrast, ECCAS is still
expected to play a certain role in maintaining peace and security in the future while learning lessons from the failure of MICOPAX, as an REC responsible for maintaining the ASF regional brigade in Central Africa.

However, with some reflection we see that linguistically, historically, and economically, the region of ‘Central Africa’ is remarkably lacking in unity and communality as a region in the first place. That is, it is nothing more than ‘the leftover area surrounded by, and not belonging to, North, West, Southern, or East Africa’. Furthermore, Central Africa does not have any regional leading nation that would be equivalent to Nigeria in West Africa, South Africa in Southern Africa, or Egypt in North Africa [Meyer 2011: 28-30; 2015: 11-12]. In contrast, in this region, there are quite a few countries that have been politically unstable since their independence, such as the CAR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In order for ECCAS, one of the weakest RECs in Africa, to bear the burden of dealing with the conflicts in Central Africa, a region that has a striking lack of unity, no regional leading nations, and a political situation whose instability is nearly chronic, ECCAS must be structurally reformed. It must also have its organisational capabilities reinforced away from its tendency to place too much emphasis on diplomacy by heads of state; additionally, support from and cooperation with France, the US, EU, AU, other RECs, and the UN will be essential.

**New Security Challenges**

ECCAS may have been the first African regional organisation to
formulate a regional strategy for maritime security. The ECCAS member states adopted the Protocole Relatif à la Stratégie de Securitisation des Intérêts Vitaux en Mer des Etats de la CEEAC du Golfe de Guinée in 2009. Then, while relying on the support of donors, ECCAS divided its ocean areas into two zones and installed a Centre multinational de Coordination (CMC) in each zone to collect information on piracy and smuggling, much like ECOWAS. In October 2014, it also opened the Centre Régional de la Sécurité Maritime de l’Afrique Centrale (CRESMAC) to unify the two CMCs in Pointe-Noire, the Republic of the Congo, corresponding to ECOWAS's CRESMAO. On the other hand, in September 2014, the Inter-regional Coordination Centre (ICC) had been established in Yaoundé, Cameroon, as an institution for coordinating West Africa's CRESMAO and Central Africa's CRESMAC. Be that as it may, the story behind reinforcing maritime governance to counter crimes at sea, such as pirating and smuggling, is that these reinforcements were promoted with the leadership of donors like the US and Germany, which have a strong interest in safe navigation in the Gulf of Guinea; it is not necessarily the case that ECOWAS and ECCAS have strong ownership of this activity.

On the other hand, in recent years, the threat of terrorism by Islamic extremists is growing in Central Africa as it is in West Africa. Chad and Cameroon are especially exposed to Boko Haram, as that group crosses the border from northern Nigeria. In response, ECCAS held a combined summit with ECOWAS in Lomé, Togo, in July 2018. They jointly agreed to the previously mentioned Lomé Declaration, and expressed their commitment to fighting terrorism.
However, Chad and Cameroon, exposed to the threat of Boko Haram, are deploying forces to join the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF) run by another regional organisation called the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), rather than ECCAS. As is clear from this reality, ECCAS has still not shown any signs of fully embarking on anti-terrorism measures. The effects of terrorism in Central Africa differ greatly among member states, and whereas ECCAS criticises terrorism and violent extremism and extols the importance of strengthening measures against these ills, it is not attempting to lead anti-terrorism efforts itself [Ingerstad and Lindell 2015].

3. Southern African Development Community (SADC)

*Regional Security Mechanism*

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a regional organisation founded in 1992 and preceded by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).

Unlike ECOWAS and ECCAS, which were founded as purely economic communities, SADC has had ‘Solidarity, Peace and Security’ listed as one of its spheres of activity (Article 4) from the start in its founding agreement, ‘The Treaty of the Southern African Development Community’. SADC activated its initiatives toward regional security issues immediately after it was founded, and established an RSM called the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation (SADC Organ) in June 1996. However, because
the SADC Organ was established without having adopted an agreement that would amount to a legal basis, there were many unclear points about its position and role from the beginning. For example, the first chair country of the SADC Organ, Zimbabwe, asserted that it was originally a successor organisation of Frontline States (FLS), which was founded in 1975 with the purpose of supporting Zimbabwe’s national liberation struggle, and that as FLS was a separate organisation from the former SADCC, the SADC Organ should also be considered a separate organisation from the SADC main body [Nathan 2016: 39-42]. Then, Zimbabwe’s President Robert Gabriel Mugabe acted as the chair of this institution for the next five years, and with insufficient reporting to and discussion with the Summit of Heads of State and Government, SADC’s top decision-making body, he decided on how to deal with conflict with SADC Organ’s independent judgment. Furthermore, the SADC Organ’s office was originally run not by the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone, Botswana, but by the government of the institution’s chair country. For this reason, its deliberations and decisions were not sufficiently communicated to the SADC main body secretariat or the governments of member states.

In order to sort out this vague relationship between the SADC main body and the SADC Organ, as well as confer a legal basis on the latter, the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation was adopted in August 2001. This protocol set the purpose of the SADC Organ to be the promotion of peace and security in Southern Africa, and formally positioned the Organ as a subordinate organisation of the Summit (Articles 2-3). Furthermore, it was
decided that the SADC Organ would primarily consist of the following: (1) the Chairperson of the Organ responsible for activities in general; (2) the Troika, consisting of the former, present, and successor chairpersons; (3) the Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO), consisting of ministers in charge of foreign affairs, defence, and security; (4) the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC), consisting of foreign ministers; and (5) the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), consisting of defence and security ministers (Article 3). Furthermore, this protocol specified that the SADC main body secretariat would be responsible for the institution's affairs, rather than the government of the chair country, as it had been previously (Article 9).

In this RSM of the SADC Organ, the most important role is played by the Organ chairperson, selected every year by the SADC Summit, and given a one-year term. The Organ chairperson forms a group called the Troika together with the previous and succeeding chairpersons, and deliberates on important matters related to peace and security in the region. Furthermore, at SADC, there is also a Troika made of the three chairpersons (previous, present, and succeeding) for the Summit, and the six leaders of both the Organ Troika and the Summit Troika gather for negotiations as necessary. This is generally called a Double Troika Summit (DTS). Although the Troika system was adopted because the Organ chairperson, the nucleus of the SADC Organ, changes every year, it has been pointed out that the Organ's response to conflict often lacks continuity [De Albuquerque and Wiklund 2015].

The Organ chairperson is assisted by the MCO, composed of
cabinet ministers responsible for the foreign affairs and defence of the SADC member states. Below that is the ISPDC, consisting of foreign ministers, and the ISDSC, consisting of defence ministers. The MCO, ISPDC, and ISDSC, are each led by a cabinet minister from the same country as the Organ chairperson.

In this way, the Summit accepted the decided outline of the SADC Organ according to the protocol adopted in 2001. In January 2002, the Summit ordered the Organ to formulate a Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO), that would act as the activity guidelines for realising the protocol. The first five-year SIPO plan was adopted in 2004, and SIPO II, the revised edition, in 2010 [SADC 2010; Van Nieuwkerk 2012].

In addition to these institutions related to the SADC Organ, there are a few security-related organisations in SADC. For example, in August 2007, the SADC member states signed the Memorandum of Understanding Amongst the Southern African Development Community Member States on the Establishment of a Southern African Development Community Standby Brigade, and established the SADC Standby Brigade (SADCBRIG) in 2008, based on that memorandum. Later, SADCBRIG was also called the SADC Standby Force (SSF), comprising ASF. Its PLANELM is located in the SADC secretariat in Gaborone.

Usually, African regional organisations do not have their own military exercise centres. However, SADC has its own education and training centre, the Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Additionally, SADC established its own early warning system for
conflict response, the Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC), in 2010. In 2015, it set up the Mediation Reference Group (MRG), made of experienced diplomats, and the Panel of Elders (PoE), made of veteran politicians. The combination of these organisations came to be called the SADC Mediation, Conflict Prevention and Preventive Diplomacy Structure. In June 2018, the Peace and Security Thematic Group (PSTG) was also launched within the secretariat to strengthen relations between SADC and donors in the peace and security sphere.

However, there are several critics that point out problems surrounding these organisations related to the SADC’s regional security initiative. For example, SADC inherited RPTC from the government of Zimbabwe, but its low quality of training has come to be seen as a problem. Because there are many costs to operate and maintain that centre, there are firmly-rooted opinions sceptical of the cost-effectiveness of having regional organisations like SADC own, manage, and operate military facilities like RPTC. Furthermore, because some SADC member states have previously been hesitant to share information with other countries—even though REWC was launched in 2010—some have pointed out that there has not been enough information sharing with the Summit and the SADC Organ up to now [Desmidt 2017: 10].

**Peace Support Operations**

Since the SADC Organ was founded in 1996, for the roughly five years until 2001—when the protocol that acted as its legal basis was adopted and the position of the organ was defined—there were in
effect 'Two Summits' in SADC surrounding peace and security: the Summit itself, and the SADC Organ. For this reason, SADC's conflict response at this time, and particularly its PSO, seemed quite complicated.

For example, anti-government forces backed by Rwanda and Uganda started an armed uprising and a conflict broke out in the DRC in August 1998. In response, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who had assumed the office of president of that country by usurping political power through force, promptly appealed to SADC for a military intervention. Accepting this request, President Mugabe, who was the SADC Organ chairperson at the time, went through deliberations with ISDSC that same month, and deployed the armies of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe to the DRC under the name 'SADC Allied Forces', effectively in support of the Kabila administration [Nathan 2016: 86-87]. This three-nation military intervention, called the 'Operation Sovereign Legitimacy (OSLEG)', however, was not something carried out with the approval of the SADC Summit. South Africa's President Nelson Mandela in particular, acting as the Summit chairperson at that time, thought that SADC should keep searching for solutions through diplomatic means, rather than conducting a military intervention in the DRC conflict, and criticised the military actions taken out through the Organ chairperson Mugabe's dogmatic initiatives. However, in the end, at the SADC Summit held in September 1998, a joint declaration was adopted to the effect of welcoming SADC member states' efforts in dispatching troops to restore peace and stability in the RDC, through half-ratifying the military actions of Angola,
Namibia, and Zimbabwe [De Wet 2014: 367].

On the other hand, South Africa, which had criticised the intervention to the DRC led by Zimbabwe, staged a military intervention in Lesotho under the name of SADC around the same time. The tiny country of Lesotho, landlocked by South Africa, fell into a state of rebellion involving the military after the results of an election held in May 1998. In these circumstances, Lesotho’s Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili appealed to SADC for a military intervention in September 1998, and in response, South Africa, as the chair country of the Summit at that time, teamed with Botswana to stage a military intervention in Lesotho after consulting with the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Following this, the force from South Africa then fiercely battled with the army of Lesotho, and succeeded in suppressing the riots, even while causing casualties. The South African government insisted that the military actions named ‘Operation Boleas’ were according to decisions by SADC. However, the only countries that had participated in that operation were South Africa and Botswana, and the main force was the South African army. This suggests that rather than being a multinational PSO conducted by SADC, Operation Boleas was in reality a bilateral military action in which South Africa, concerned about political instability in Lesotho, obtained the cooperation of Botswana to avoid being criticised for an independent intervention, and conducted military operations with minimal pretence that they were an SADC force. Then, in the background of this South African-led military intervention, there may have been expectations at work, on the part of the South African government, to attempt to protect
its own interests in Lesotho, including a water securement project [Nathan 2016: 82-84].

In this way, for a while after the foundation of the SADC Organ, SADC's conflict response and its PSO in particular were divided between the Summit and the Organ. With this internal split in SADC, some of the member states progressed in the complicated way of taking on the name of SADC and staging military interventions. However, with the start of the 2000s, as the SADC Organ was officially positioned as a subordinate organisation under the Summit, maintenance and reforms were advanced based on SIPO. As a result, the chaotic situation of the latter half of the 1990s gradually disappeared. In recent years, Lesotho’s army chief of staff was assassinated in September 2017. When the political situation became unstable, the SADC Summit and the Organ’s DTS were held in Pretoria, South Africa, that same month. Based on an appeal by Lesotho Prime Minister Tom Thabane, the DTS voted to deploy a PSO mission. This SADC PSO force, later named the SADC Preventive Mission in Lesotho (SAPMIL), was a very small-scale mission of only 270 people, but activities like policing and maintaining public order officially began in Lesotho in December 2017.

Apart from the formal PSO by SADC, some of the SADC member states deployed the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), under the name of the UN, for the DRC. The FIB deployment had begun in May 2012, when the regional organisation, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), voted to establish a ‘neutral international force’ to sweep up anti-government armed
insurgents in the eastern part of the DRC. However, after that, the process for actually creating the force within ICGLR came to a halt, and negotiations for that were moved to SADC. At the SADC Summit in December 2012, with South African and Tanzanian forces as the mainline, the deployment of an SADC army was decided with the goal of keeping the peace by suppressing anti-government forces in eastern Congo. However, SADC was unable to afford the large expense of that deployment, and in March 2013, FIB was established as a part of the UN PKO that had been deployed in the DRC starting in 2010: the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Comprised of SADC member states Tanzania, South Africa, and Malawi, FIB and the DRC government forces developed a search-and-destroy operation for an anti-government group, the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), starting in July 2013. By December of that year, they succeeded in suppressing the insurgents. This activity by FIB was not necessarily an SADC PSO, but some SADC member states used military power under the auspices of a UN PKO to deal with armed insurgents. This example of successfully suppressing insurgents in a relatively short period of time gathered interest internationally.

**New Security Challenges**

The Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) was established in 1995 to promote regional cooperation between police organisations in Southern Africa. SARPCCO was originally a separate regional institution from
SADC, but regional cooperation in the policing realm was progressing within SADC as well, with the latter adopting the Protocol on Extradition and the Protocol on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in October 2002. At the SADC Summit in 2006, it was agreed that SARPCCO would be integrated into SADC. In 2009, SARPCCO was officially transferred to the position of a subordinate organisation of the SADC Organ’s ISDSC. SARPCCO’s headquarters are located in Harare, and it is advancing regional investigation cooperation to take severe measures against car stealing and drug smuggling [Nathan 2016: 61-62].

In the international community, since the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, which was the first resolution to clearly connect women with peace and security issues, interest has been rising in the topic of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Since that resolution, the UN Security Council has adopted many resolutions on individual issues related to WPS. Taking up this trend in the international community, SADC announced the SADC Regional Strategy on Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022) in August 2018, expressing the mainstreaming of gender in peace and security spheres, and the protection of women from sexual violence in conflicts.

**Conclusion**

This article considered ECOWAS, ECCAS, and SADC, three regional organisations from among the eight RECs officially recognised by the AU, and gave a general outline of their regional
security initiatives from three points of view: (1) regional security mechanisms, (2) peace support operations, and (3) new security challenges.

It was clear from the examination undertaken in this article that the regional security initiatives conducted by the three RECs have many points in common in their institutional aspects, such as RSMs. Furthermore, although some progress has been seen in their preparations, the practical aspects of their PSO show a number of disparities surrounding the means and results of their deployments. It is relatively easy to set up the 'institution' of RSMs, but obviously, executing the 'practice' of PSO is something that comes with many difficulties, including cost. However, what is strongly demanded of Africa's RECs with regards to regional security initiatives is likely no longer the results relating to the 'institutions' like RSMs. What is now strongly anticipated are the results of the 'practice', including the operationalisation of ASF’s regional brigades.

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Notes

1 There are many large and small regional organisations in Africa, but the
AU officially recognises eight of those organisations as RECs: (1) the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), (2) the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), (3) the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), (4) the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), (5) the East African Community (EAC), (6) the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), (7) the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and (8) the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

2 The following are the ECOWAS nations included in each OMZ decided by the protocol (underlined country names indicate ZB locations): Zone 1 (The Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal), Zone 2 (Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, and Niger), Zone 3 (Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ghana), Zone 4 (Benin, Nigeria, and Togo).

3 The ECOWAS countries included in each zone decided by EIMS are as follows (underlined country names indicate countries planned for MMCC instalment): Zone E (Benin, Nigeria, Togo, and Niger), Zone F (Ghana, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea), Zone G (Cape Verde, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Mali).

4 For example, Burundi and Rwanda also belong to EAC and the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), the DRC and Angola belong to SADC, and Chad and Cameroon belong to CEN-SAD.

5 CEMAC has seven member states: Cameroon, the DRC, Gabon, the CAR, the Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea. All are also members of ECCAS (as of August 2018).

6 ECCAS’s ocean areas are divided into two zones: Zone A (Angola, the Republic of the Congo, and the DRC) and Zone D (Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe) (underlined country names indicate CMC location countries).

7 LCBC has six member states: Cameroon, Chad, the CAR, Libya, Niger, and Nigeria (as of September 2018).

8 ICGLR has 12 member states: Angola, Burundi, the CAR, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia (as of August 2018).
References


