



GA1: Diasarmament and International Security Committee

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Issue: Curbing the impact of foreign military involvement in Africa

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Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

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I. Introduction

80% of every United Nations (UN) peacekeeper is currently stationed in Africa. Although peacekeeping forces are often seen as the most beneficial form of foreign military involvement, providing stability and humanitarian support, they remain fundamentally foreign actors. Sadly, the peacekeeping forces are only a small portion of the foreign military present in Africa, as emphasized by The Mo Ibrahim Foundation's report of "a total of 14 non-African countries having set up military bases in 23 of the 54 African nations." Countries such as the French Republic, the Russian Federation, and the United States maintain significant permanent troop deployments and operational bases, underscoring the importance of these global powers maintaining a strong presence in this region. This fight for influence over Africa is far from a recent development, as anybody who knows what colonialism is would be aware of. Especially, France puts in a lot of effort to stay on good terms with its past colonies, although France's reign over these regions is long in the past, their interests are still very much present. There has been a sudden shift in France's relations with its former African colonies, however, especially in the Sahel Region, as countries such as Burkina Faso have shown France's large economic interests and constant exploitation of the area as a threat to their sovereignty and cultural integrity, resulting in the abolishment of many contracts with France, including military agreements. Shying away from France, a global power that rose to the occasion, was the Russian Federation.

It would be a false statement, however, to say that the Russian Federation is a newcomer to African internal politics, as there is a prominent period of several proxy wars between Russia, then known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the United States of America (USA). Coinciding with the Cold War period, the first military bases were established both for the USSR and the USA. An example was the Wheelus Air Base in Libya, taken over from Italy. The USSR had several, such as the Berbera Naval Base in Somalia, and the Luanda & Lobito facilities in Angola. Although this was the initiation period of influence for the USA on Africa, what truly kindled their desire for increased control and monitoring was 9/11. After the tragic event took place in 2002, the USA opened a 'global war on terror', promptly invading Iraq and turning its attention to the African continent as well. Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti was leased from France that year, and the USA shifted its strategy to more flexible military bases rather than Cold War-style garrisons that were much less open to change, with some speculations going as far as saying that the USA has close to 60



smaller operating sites spread all over the continent, but especially around the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions.

Camp Lemonnier, although being the USA's only permanent outpost on the continent, is at an extremely strategic location. The base is in proximity to the Bab El-Mendeb Strait, which possesses such a significant role for copious countries around the world that 5% of Djibouti's annual GDP, around 300 million dollars, is supplied by the contracts and needs of military bases such as Camp Lemonnier, which these foreign militaries are willing to pay.

II. Key Vocabulary

Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA): A status of forces agreement is an agreement that is signed between a host country and a foreign country that details the stay, deployment, scope, and similar factors regarding the stationing of military forces in the country. If this is only a temporary accord, it is called a Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

Foreign Military Bases: Foreign military bases are well-established concepts that trace back thousands of years to ancient empires. Romans erected fortresses all over Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East with almost the same intentions as modern-day bases, maintaining control over vast territories, monitoring the economic and political situation of the surroundings, and ensuring the long-lived presence of the nation in that location. The British Empire relied on these strategic bases as well, enabling the control of sea routes and colonial possessions. Similarly, many current global powers have a military base either in Djibouti or Somalia to be close to the Bab El-Mendab Canal, which directly leads to the Suez Canal, arguably the most relevant sea route in today's world.

Neo-Colonialism: Neo-colonialism is the usage of economic, military, political, and cultural factors to put other countries in a kind of chokehold, especially implemented by former colonists in their former colonies. France, up until very recently, set a strong example of neo-colonialism in Africa, with French being the national language of most of their former colonies. Additionally, French products dominate in all kinds of sectors, and even most policies are borrowed from the French.

Mercenary Groups (Private Military Companies): Mercenaries are paid soldiers who primarily fight for economic gain rather than patriotism or morality. These mercenary groups often fight for the highest payers and may sometimes even switch sides in the middle of a war if the circumstances are right. Although these groups may still have relations with certain governments, such as the Wagner Group and Russia, these relationships are almost always very complex and strategically ambiguous. Some states use mercenaries to



deny responsibility for human rights violations and avoid international repercussions. The Russian state strongly backs Wagner mercenaries with ammunition, funding, and assistance in operation planning.

Proxy War: A proxy war is a conflict fought by one or more extremely influential countries with global motives without being directly or officially involved. These battles are distinguished by the usage of surrogate forces through which the global powers orchestrate battles and avoid direct military deployment. Some of the most well-known proxy wars are the Vietnam War and the Korean War; however, Africa has also seen its fair share of proxy wars during the Cold War period. The Ogaden War is a prime example, which on paper was caused by a fight over the Ogaden region, but in actuality was the USA and USSR's battle dance for influence in Africa.

III. Involved Countries and Organizations

United States of America

The primary presence of the United States military in Africa since 2007 is implemented through AFRICOM (U.S. Africa Command), which was established to oversee pre-existing operations and partnerships across the continent. AFRICOM's central hub is based in Djibouti, Camp Lemonnier to be specific, and its scope of operations includes Cooperative Security Locations, Forward Operating Sites, all of which serve crucial tactical locations for counterterrorism, drone operations, and special forces missions across Africa. This prominent presence of the USA on the continent is reasoned to be a way of combating extremist groups, securing strategic trade routes, and supporting allied African forces by means of training, intelligence sharing, and logistical support. Occasionally, operations AFRICOM conducts overlap with French and other Western activities, particularly in the Sahel region, where the tensions are high as ever, creating both operational coordination and competition for influence.

France

France has, throughout colonial history and after the abolishment thereof, been the most active foreign military power in Africa, often intertwining itself in its former colonies' internal issues, economic operations, and battle against threats. Conducted in 2013, Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane (2014–2022) are prime examples of France's engagement in its former colonies' combat with Islamist insurgencies in Mali and the Sahel region. However good-hearted it may seem of France to be helping out, there is a darker truth behind it, which has led to wide criticism. France, by not allowing the country's army to fight off the insurgents, has perpetuated dependency and political and military instability. France is perceived as pursuing a sneaky strategy of domination to maintain African states' support in all sectors,



particularly in West Africa, to maximise their own gain. This has contributed to the persistence of superficial democracies and fragile states that struggle to resolve internal governance and security challenges independently.

Türkiye

Türkiye has recently expanded its footprint in Africa primarily through its dominant market share in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations and the establishment of a permanent base in Mogadishu, Somalia. Focusing on training Somali troops, especially crucial during a period where tensions with Djibouti and unrecognized Somaliland have risen drastically, providing air support, and establishing strategic partnerships along the Horn of Africa. Türkiye, like many others, hopes to exert influence on the Bab El-Mandeb Strait, which is inadvertently important for Black Sea trade as well. While less significant than French or U.S. deployments, Türkiye's trend shows a growing interest in projecting influence in the Red Sea and East African regions. Türkiye's presence occasionally complements Western counterterrorism efforts but also introduces new dynamics in competition for regional alliances and influence over African militaries, especially with Türkiye having followed a balance policy between the Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc for a very long time now.

Russia

Russia's significance in Africa has skyrocketed in the post-2010 period, largely through private mercenary companies such as Wagner and state-led initiatives like the Africa Corps, targeting security cooperation, arms supplies, and the establishment of a proposed Alliance of Sahel States (AES) joint force, which has been pretty successful until now. Russia has embedded at minimum 2,500 military personnel across AES countries, in return, training, supporting logistically, and providing direct operational assistance. Wagner operatives continue their operations in Libya, Mali, CAR, and Sudan, often securing resource concessions in addition to military support. Russia's operations sometimes counterbalance Western influence, creating a triangular dynamic with U.S. and French activities, particularly in the Sahel and North Africa. Countries such as Burkina Faso and Chad have used Russian support as an escape route from French grasp in the last few years.

African Union

The AU and its regional offshoots, like the AES, aim to strengthen African self-reliance in defense and security. The AES, with Russian support, seeks to establish a joint security force to manage regional threats while reducing dependence on Western or foreign militaries. In practice, however, these organizations often operate in close interaction with foreign actors, including the U.S., France, and Russia,



for training, logistical support, and intelligence. The AU's initiatives, while well-intentioned, sometimes struggle to enforce autonomy because Member States rely on foreign military and economic support.

Djibouti

Djibouti exemplifies the economic and strategic impact of foreign military bases in Africa. As a nation with only 900,000 people, it is the country with the highest density of army personnel, revealing its importance as a central node for regional operations. Foreign bases contribute approximately 5% of Djibouti's GDP, providing employment and business possibilities, although this economic dependency risks undermining diversification and resilience. Any geopolitical shift, base reduction, or closure could severely impact the national economy, and it is not very easy to convert military bases into anything other than prisons, which lowers the odds of their reuse. Djibouti's situation highlights the interconnectedness of African host nations and foreign powers, where security arrangements simultaneously create economic leverage and strategic vulnerability.

IV. Focused Overview of the Issue

1. Geographic Importance

The strategic value Africa poses for global powers and the vulnerability of most of its nations have resulted in the continent becoming one of the most highly militarized and prioritized regions by foreign powers in the world. This phenomenon is furthered through the continent's peculiar geographic positioning, especially some chokepoints, one of the most significant being the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and is the only possibility to access the Suez Canal and thus Europe without having to meander your way around the entire continent. One tenth of the entire world's maritime trade passes through this narrow strait, making control over the region a mouthwatering topic of discussion for nations with global influence. This is exactly why Djibouti, although small in size, hosts military bases from numerous countries such as the United States, China, France, Japan, Italy, and Saudi Arabia, contributing nearly 5% of the country's GDP. There is one small issue, though: these kinds of economic gains come at a steep price, becoming more and more dependent on foreign powers, so much so that sometimes countries that act in similar manners to Djibouti tend to become nothing more than puppets.

The stage where the puppetmaster enjoys performing the most nowadays is the Horn of Africa, along with others such as Somalia, and even though unrecognized, Somaliland. Although AFRICOM's actions are categorized by Washington under the USA's broader "Global War on Terror" ideology, the Institute for Security Studies denotes that these deployments more often than not "blur the line between capacity-building and direct military involvement," undermining African agency. Türkiye's establishment of its



by far most extensive overseas military base in Mogadishu during the year 2017 is another example of an attempt at gaining military influence. Especially considering Türkiye's ambitions in the sector of UAV and drone technologies and surveillance over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait underscores how multiple powers now project influence into the same spaces, amplifying regional tensions.

Although it has been mentioned countless times up to this point, the region stretching from Mali to Chad, known as the Sahel, has been deeply involved in foreign military-related issues, and it inevitably comes up in discussions one way or another almost everywhere. Dominated for a long time by solely French operations, some of the most recent and significant being Serval in 2013 and Barkhane for 8 years until 2022, the region has since seen a drastic change in that French troops are being radically pushed out in favor of an influx of Russian influence through Wagner Group deployments and the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States in 2024. According to Mucahid Durmaz, a senior analyst at global risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft, "Chad's decision marks the final nail in the coffin of France's post-colonial military dominance in the entire Sahel region." ([The North Africa Post](#)) The expulsion of French and U.S. forces represents exactly what the AES stands for: a strong repulsion against neocolonial interference. Despite its aspirations of total independence, these countries, having been, so to speak, puppets of France for decades now, cannot suddenly cut off their ropes and therefore, while they slowly learn to stand up for themselves, AES forces rely heavily on Russian training, arms supplies, and Wagner's operatives. An estimate of 2,500 personnel ([AP News](#)) emphasizes the paradox of striving for autonomy while inviting alternative foreign dependencies, although it would be very unrealistic to expect the AES to suddenly be able to become fully independent with the snap of a finger.



Image 1: A map of important straits and canals around the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea ([EIA](#))



2. Abundance of Natural Resources

While the geographic importance is what pulls powers to Africa, what's underground urges them to stay longer than they had intended. One third of the world's mineral reserves, some of which are the most valuable on Earth, namely oil, gas, gold, and rare earth elements. Yet, as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation points out, "resource wealth has often translated not into development but into heightened foreign interest and domestic fragility." To ensure the safety of their economic goals, global powers sign Status of Forces Agreements with host nations, while not entirely falsely claiming they are solely to maintain safety in the region and have nothing to do with the foreign militaries' own aspirations.

An exemplary case can be recognized through groups like M23's continuation of destabilising North and South Kivu, regions rich in elements which are backbones of the entire technology industry: coltan and cobalt. Similarly, in the Central African Republic, Wagner operatives who assist the government militarily can be seen as having embedded themselves as guardians of diamond and gold concessions, which they have personal interests in. The [Retrospect Journal](#) claims that these PMCs quite often "operate in a gray zone between state policy and corporate interest," enabling countries like Russia to secure strategic assets without overtly violating international norms.

France's interventions in Mali under Operation Serval and later Operation Barkhane were justified as counterterrorism efforts but were widely perceived as attempts to protect uranium mines in Niger and other strategic resources critical for France's nuclear energy sector. Similarly, Turkey's rise in UAV exports, including sales to Ethiopia during the Tigray conflict, shows how technological dominance has become another vector for influence. Ankara uses a system where it provides critical military systems for internal conflicts in regions of interest, which in turn enables it to have leverage over important resource corridors and maritime trade routes.

This constant battle between the puppet and the puppeteer highlights neo-colonialism and the persistent problems it causes. Resource control is, as it has always been, a strong enough motivator for many countries to invent copious different tactics to attach strings to nations they have taken an interest in, although overt colonial rule has vanished. Countries that have made it a sector to host foreign military bases, like Djibouti or Niger, may see financial benefits in the short term; however, they risk being locked into economic models heavily reliant on external actors. This kind of dependency is so influential and tough to break that, at an extreme point, the host country's independence may be more rhetoric than real.

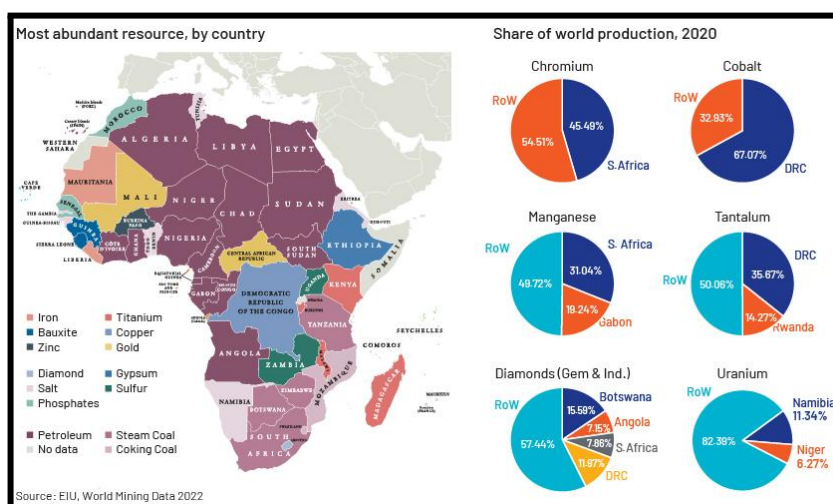


Image 2: Natural resources most abundant country by country, specific comparison with production amount in the rest of the world for some (ACTIVITY)

3. Colonial Past

The centuries of colonial legacy cannot be overlooked while trying to comprehend the reasoning behind the enduring presence of foreign armies in Africa. Serious gaps in security resulting from the chaotic attempts at governance, democracy, and politics of states that had lived as colonies for hundreds of years between the 1950s and 70s benefited the former colonisers, as it was much easier to convince most of them to sign bilateral military treaties, ensuring the continuation of the former coloniser's prominent presence in the region. France, in particular, institutionalized this arrangement through mechanisms like the *Françafrique* policy, which facilitated ongoing French involvement in African political and military affairs under the guise of partnership.

These past few years, however, have painted a very different picture, as copious protests all over Mali, Burkina Faso, and many more have led to Paris's decision to scale down its operations, for example, its withdrawal from operation Barkhane in 2022. Once again, history has repeated itself, and although not newly sovereign, these African countries, which were "helped out" by French troops for such a long time, had to look elsewhere for military assistance. Russian military deployments in Mali, CAR, and Libya, often in exchange for mining concessions, mirror older forms of extraction, raising concerns about a new wave of dependency under a different flag, and the recently agreed-upon Russian naval base in Sudan can be defined as the cherry on top for this global power's ambition in gaining traction over the region.

The UN's peacekeeping missions also operate within this context. This may sound peculiar since the UN is an international organization that claims to serve no nation's individual benefits. Still, it must be recognised that the African continent needs 80% of the entire peacekeeping forces to assist them in enforcing military security, which will not help them in the long run. As the [ISS](#) notes, "peacekeeping cannot



substitute for political solutions, especially when mandates are shaped more by donor priorities than by local needs.” This dependency on UN blue berets is highly likely to have catastrophic events when the UN deems it adequate to abolish the missions, and the UN will inevitably have to step in again in the long run, resulting in a vicious circle.

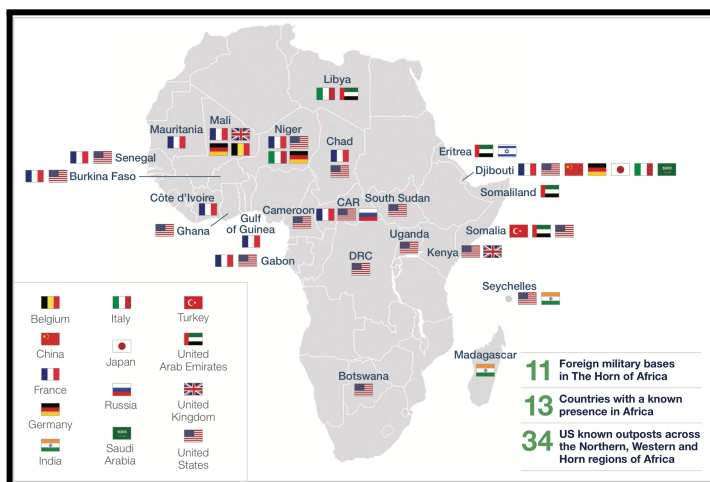


Image 3: Locations of foreign military bases in Africa (ISS Africa)

4. Cycles of Dependency

A lack of infrastructure was imminent from the early days of most African countries' independence. The fact was that broken political systems, non-cohesive national identities, and barely existing militaries ultimately deemed these nations extremely vulnerable.

The Rwandan genocide, one of the most bloody events in such a short time period, remains as a gruesome reminder of how truly messed up the national identity and ideologies were in post-colonial Africa due to centuries of oppression. Foreign powers, who are often very eager to intervene, watched on for 100 days as the Hutus and Tutsis fought on because of manmade separations that colonialists had used to separate and keep them powerless for such a long time. The death of circa 800.000 people deemed itself as quite useful later on however, as these international actors justified their heightened military involvement in the region using the purge they were nothing more but an audience to. The UN can also do so much as seen in South Sudan, when the UN mission formulated to assist in state-development, UNMISS, had to shift its focus on the civil war that broke out in 2014, reiterating the limits of peacekeeping when local institutions collapsed.

Today, counterinsurgency campaigns are some of the most prolific markers of reliance on foreign fighters. Jihadist insurgencies quite often outnumber and sometimes even outsmart African militaries in the Sahel, pushing regimes to look for international assistance, from French forces under Serval to Russian Wagner operatives. As the [Futures Africa Report](#) has very well expressed, the main issue is that “security



assistance has too often prioritized militarized responses over political solutions, entrenching cycles of dependency.”

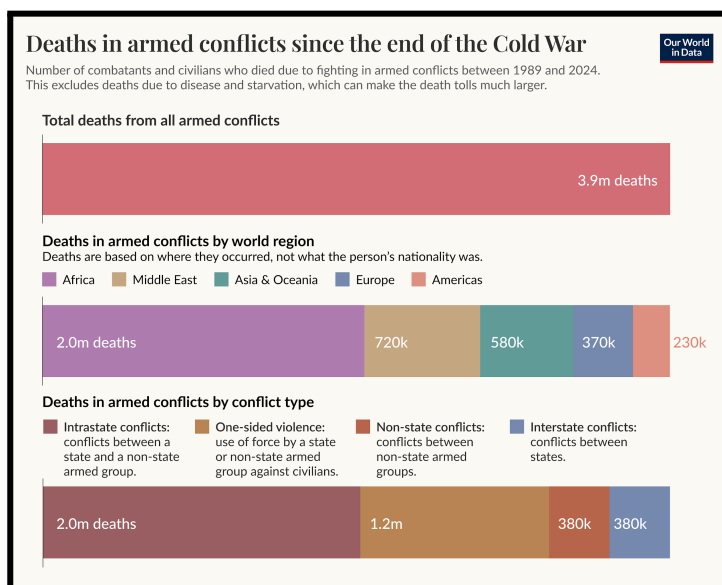


Image 5: The majority of deaths in armed conflicts in the modern era occurred in Africa (Our World Our Data)

V. Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
1950s-1970s	Dozens of states gained independence, but tensions with neighbors and the lack of an established military led them to defense pacts with former colonial powers, laying the foundation for an ever-present foreign troop presence
May 25, 1963	The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was the first major initiative that promoted non-interference and sovereignty in newly independent African nations, but lacked enforcement, allowing continued foreign military influence
July 1977 - March 1978	The Ogaden War took place between Ethiopia and Somalia regarding the Ogaden region, where both sides were majorly fueled by foreign powers at odds with each other, making it an evident instance of a proxy war
March 1993	The official declaration of the UNOSOM 2 demonstrated the limits of foreign-initiated stabilization attempts, giving an upper hand to skeptics of outside interventions
July 9, 2002	With the formation of the African Union (AU), the African Standby Force (ASF) worked to strengthen frameworks for



	African-led security, intending to reduce reliance on foreign troops and tactics
Mar 19 - Oct 31, 2011	The NATO intervention in Libya plays a crucial role in the regime change, resulting in destabilizing the region, fueling terrorism, and rekindling African resistance to foreign-led solutions
2014	U.S. drone hubs and special ops centers are sprouting in Kenya, Niger, and especially Djibouti, raising sovereignty concerns
September 30, 2017	Turkey establishes its military base in Somalia, the largest anywhere, intending to gain an influence on the Bab El-Mandeb Strait, and agrees to train Somali troops
2020-2022	Russia's Wagner Group gains a stronghold in several countries, occupying gaps left by retreating Western forces, shifting Africa's alliances towards private and state-backed non-Western organizations
2023-2025	A new trend of African states ending military agreements with France emerges, especially in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions, amid rising anti-colonial sentiment, reducing Western military presence in countries such as Chad, Senegal, and Burkina Faso
September 16, 2023	The Alliance of Sahel States is established, ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), and foreign assistance is set aside in favor of direct relations and self-reliant military initiatives
February 12, 2025	Russia and Sudan strike a deal that successfully finalizes talks of the establishment of a Russian naval base in the country, a step that strengthens Russia's strategic partnership with African countries, shifting away from French dependency

VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

[UNSCR 690\(1991\)](#)

This Security Council resolution shaped the oldest still ongoing peacekeeping mission in Africa, the MINURSO (UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara). Considering that the Western Sahara region



was a topic of debate for decades at that point between countries, mainly Morocco and Spain, and the region's self-determination was also in shambles, this resolution's actions were deemed necessary. Monitoring the ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front, organizing and conducting a referendum for Western Sahara's future status were two of the main objectives. Although it has been 34 years as of now, this referendum is still to be held due to disputes over voter eligibility. The region is in shambles and has been like that for a long time now due to foreign states and militaries' ambition clashes with those of insurgent groups regarding the region.

[UNSCR 1925\(2010\)](#)

This resolution's primary focus was turning the mission called MONUC into MONUSCO (UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) after the war, which was the main focus point of MONUC. MONUSCO is an ongoing effort to reflect a stabilization mandate directly involving itself with the protection of civilians from violence, disarmament, and reintegration of armed groups, and extending the state's authority upon its own lands. This resolution was further amended in 2013 to establish the Force Intervention Brigade(FIB), the UN's first-ever offensive combat force aimed at rebels such as M23 and the ADF. The mission is still active because M23 is still quite prominent and brings a certain instability to the state, which the peacekeeping forces have to combat.

[UNSCR 1990\(2011\)](#)

Observing a turbulent environment in the region, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei(UNISFA) was formed to monitor the disputed Abyei Area between Sudan and South Sudan. Abyei continues to be a boiling pot for fighting due to contradictory claims over borders, oil reserves, and ethnic divisions. Without UNISFA, the escalation of clashes would be inevitable.

[UNSCR 1996\(2011\)](#)

The United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan(UNMISS) was formulated through this resolution to assist the newly formed nation of South Sudan's efforts in prospering. Although there have been some positive aspects, such as major assistance in reporting human rights violations and facilitating peacebuilding efforts, the peacekeeping mission has not been able to prevent the outbreak of a civil war in 2014. Following the commencement of this war, a mandate shifted the mission's scope to prioritization of civilian protection and the assistance of humanitarian aid efforts.

[UNSCR 2149\(2014\)](#)

In 2014, after the outbreak of religiously motivated sectarian violence in the region, the UN decided to formulate the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic(MINUSCA) to restore state authority and facilitate electoral processes. In 2019, the Khartoum Peace Agreement was



integrated into the MINUSCA's mandate in hopes of uplifting reconciliation. Coups, rebel alliances, and heavy foreign influence, especially connected to the Wagner Group's activities, have deemed the continuation of this peacekeeping mission a necessity.

[Alliance of Sahel States \(AES\) Treaty](#)

Officially signed in July 2024 by the states of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, this treaty intends the creation of a new international cooperation in reaction to ECOWAS's and foreign militaries' actions that these founding countries deemed as harmful to their own sovereignty and having adverse impacts on their own prosperity and development. Similar to the NATO mentality, the AES treaty decided that any attack against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one is considered an attack on all. All three members took the drastic but necessary decision of ending defense agreements with former colonial powers and expelling foreign troops (French, U.S., UN), symbolically challenging decades of foreign military presence. AES nations face, however, very serious new constraints, namely in the form of limited military capabilities, poor logistics, and instability, which have all raised doubts regarding their capacity to independently combat jihadist insurgencies.

[Silencing the Guns Initiative](#)

A flagship project under the AU's Agenda 2063 project, which promises to uplift the entirety of Africa in very significant ways by that date, it made the quite frankly absurd pledge to end all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, and mass atrocities in Africa by 2020. Although everybody knew how unrealistic this was, the aim was to set an immediate goal to accomplish and work towards it as best as possible. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2457, explicitly endorsing the initiative and urging coordinated AU-UN efforts to address complex conflict dynamics across the continent, which built a new dynamic partnership between two important actors in Africa.

VII. Failed Solution Attempts

[Organization of African Unions](#)

The first attempt at properly unifying the newly sovereign former African colonies came in 1963 through the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) through the joint efforts of Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, and Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, with all 33 independent nations being signatories. The most crucial vision for the Organization was centered on preventing the reemergence of colonialism, safeguarding sovereignty, and promoting a collective ideology where all African nations worked together to ensure each other's security and prosperity during a time of much struggle. However, despite its ambitious mandate and motivated members, the OAU barely achieved meaningful results. The newly independent states rapidly realised the presence of deep political divides, and without any structure of



proper enforcement, the OAU's plans of prosperity remained as kind suggestions left up to the discretion of newborn states plagued by the chaotic world of independence. Although independent, most countries struggled to remain self-dependent, with a majority pursuing bilateral military agreements with global powers, sometimes even inviting foreign forces onto their soil for training, protection, or strategic advantage. As a result, the OAU's goal of shielding Africa from external dominance remained largely unfulfilled, highlighting the difficulty of achieving unity in a landscape of competing national interests.

The African Union's Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact

A new attempt at unifying Africa came in 2002, seeking to learn from the OAU's mistakes and overcome its shortcomings, its successor: the African Union(AU). An early initiative that stood out as being quite well formulated was the 2005 adoption of the Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact, intending to strengthen mutual defense cooperation, and although traditional colonialism was long gone by that point, ensuring the development of their own militaries through the abolishment of bilateral military agreements, which they had pursued in the early years of their independence. On paper, the pact represented a decisive step toward continental self-reliance in matters of security and the establishment of an army. Sadly, in reality, funding limitations, inconsistent implementation, and persistent political rivalries undermined its success. Compounding the problem, several signatory states continued to deepen their military partnerships with outside powers, directly contradicting the pact's spirit and exposing its limitations as a tool for curbing foreign influence.

Thomas Sankara and his Assassination

While continental frameworks struggled, some revolutionary figures stood out from the public, wishing to lead their nations to a proper confrontation with external domination at the national level, none more notably than Thomas Sankara, the revolutionary president of Burkina Faso. Rising to power in 1983, Sankara stubbornly rejected foreign aid, condemned the exploitation of African resources, and resisted the militarization of African politics by external actors. He envisioned a self-sufficient and sovereign Africa, free from the grip of any form of colonialism, whether traditional or neo-colonial. His assassination in 1987, however widely believed, for obvious reasons, to have involved foreign-backed complicity, highlighted just how far these global powers were ready to go to maintain their grip on the continent. With his death, his vision was also brought to a sudden and violent end. Sankara's death strongly symbolized how deeply entrenched external influence had become and how aggressively it reacted when challenged.

The Libyan Peace Process and Foreign Troop Withdrawal Agreements

It wasn't, however, only individual countries that were problematic for Africa's prosperity, illustrated by the NATO-led no-fly zone and arms embargo, which locked up Libya's attempts to gain control over its own country, leading to an almost total collapse. The Libyan Peace Process and subsequent Foreign Troop



Withdrawal Agreements were established under the leadership of the UN. After years of active conflict, the Berlin Conferences of 2020 and 2021 brought together international and regional actors to negotiate an end to foreign interference. A key commitment decided during this period was the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. Despite repeated pledges, foreign militaries and private security companies, quite unsurprisingly, including Russian Wagner operatives, which are even more difficult to remove since they are private military companies not completely bound to any nation, and units backed by the UAE and Egypt, remain entrenched. Libya has become a vivid example of how competing global interests can paralyze international agreements and perpetuate instability.

As evidently revealed through these historical occurrences and turning points, up until this point, most African nations have not been able to cleanse their countries of foreign military dominance, and isolated attempts to do so have backfired consistently.

VIII. Possible Solutions

It always seems quite pointless to hypothesize potential solutions to international conflicts and complications. However, politics and diplomacy are such widespread and intricate topics that often even the most seasoned experts feel that they are quite simply clueless when it comes to this brainstorming process. What they, however, do not do is give up. Therefore, it seems to be adequate to take a lesson from these specialists and think critically for ourselves what we can come up with, however bleak or incomplete they may seem.

Counterterrorism measures and resource protection have always been the primary reasoning behind the presence of non-local militaries in Africa. This is a direct threat to the undermining of sovereignty and fostering long-term dependency. Therefore, solutions must be crafted to not only strengthen African states internally but also provide collective mechanisms that safeguard continental autonomy.

Defense Technology

A lasting approach to countering the influence of foreign militaries is to eliminate dependency on their weaponry and defense systems. At present, many African states are limited by procurement contracts that tie them to external suppliers, who in turn gain not only economic profit but also significant political leverage. To address this, a Pan-African Defense Technology Alliance could be established with the explicit aim of coordinating indigenous research, development, and production of equipment adapted to the continent's security needs. Pooling technical expertise, financial resources, and skilled personnel across member states would allow Africa to create a self-sustaining system in which states are not forced to turn outward every time their militaries require modernization. Beyond equipment, such an alliance would also



serve as a platform for innovation, ensuring that Africa sets its own standards in the defense sector rather than importing them wholesale.

Resource Protection Treaties

The presence of foreign militaries is often justified under the pretext of protecting foreign-owned resource projects. This has created a situation in which economic arrangements directly translate into security vulnerabilities, as resource concessions can lead to an implicit or explicit dependency on external armed forces. To counter this, states could adopt resource protection treaties that require foreign firms to partner with state-owned enterprises and carry out mandatory skills transfer to local populations. In doing so, the protection of resources becomes an internal responsibility rather than an external bargaining chip. Furthermore, ensuring that local communities benefit directly through employment and training reduces the legitimacy of foreign claims that African states cannot safeguard their own wealth. These treaties transform that which has been a source of vulnerability into an instrument of strength, strengthening national sovereignty while creating long-term economic resilience. By embedding local participation and control at every level of extraction and protection, such models render foreign intervention not only unnecessary but increasingly unjustifiable, paving the way to a more independent and secure model of resource governance.

Local Military Training

One of the most direct drivers of foreign military presence is the perception that African armies are incapable of handling sophisticated threats independently. This perception becomes self-reinforcing: the more states rely on outside actors, the less incentive there is to develop strong domestic forces. To reverse this cycle, regional training academies could be established across the continent, where standardized military doctrine is taught while still allowing for regional flexibility. Such academies would not only strengthen the professionalism of armed forces but would also emphasize counterterrorism and peacekeeping strategies tailored to local realities, reducing the need for external expertise. Building capacity from within ensures that African states can address their own security threats without presenting an open door for foreign intervention.

Information Network

Foreign militaries frequently justify their involvement by claiming that African intelligence services are fragmented and insufficient to deal with transnational challenges. In many cases, this lack of coordination has indeed left states reliant on foreign intelligence. The establishment of the Pan-African Sovereignty Intelligence Network (PASIN) would provide a clear alternative. By creating a continent-wide system of intelligence sharing, member states could pool resources against terrorism, organized crime, and piracy, ensuring rapid responses without the need for outside monitoring. Crucially, such a network would allow



African states to identify and act upon threats proactively rather than waiting for foreign actors to dictate the security agenda. This would also give smaller states access to intelligence capacities they otherwise could not develop on their own, closing a gap often exploited by external powers. Eventually, PASIN institutionalization could foster a culture of confidence and cooperation among African states that would strengthen regional solidarity as well as collective selfreliance. When intelligence is domesticated on the continent, the rationale for its penetration by foreign elements will wither away and it would then be possible for Africa to assert its strategic autonomy and rewrite the narrative of dependency that has hitherto shackled its sovereignty.

[Monitoring of Sovereignty by the AU](#)

Foreign military bases, once established, rarely remain temporary and often grow into symbols of dependency that extend far beyond security matters. A binding sovereignty clause within AU security frameworks could directly address this by requiring any member state to seek AU mediation and approval before signing long-term agreements on foreign basing rights. This would prevent unilateral decisions from compromising the sovereignty of the continent as a whole. Temporary deployments could still be permitted where strictly necessary, but they would remain transparent, time-bound, and accountable under AU oversight. By institutionalizing such monitoring, the AU would ensure that sovereignty is preserved collectively, rather than left vulnerable to bilateral deals that disproportionately benefit foreign powers at the expense of African independence.

IX. Useful Links

[UN Peacekeeping Operations](#)

[RULAC-Browse Conflicts](#)

[TLDR-Why Africa Hates France](#)

[CaspianReport-France Secretly Owns 14 countries](#)

[RealLifeLore-Why Does Every Country Have A Military Base in Djibouti?](#)

[Britannica-European Colonization of Africa](#)

[Evolving Military Landscape in Africa: International players and their impact - Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#)



[The dilemma of foreign security assistance in Africa - ISS African Futures](#)

[Shadow Wars: Cold War Foreign Policy in Africa - Retrospect Journal](#)

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