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The African Mission in Burundi

Lessons Learned from the African Union's first Peace Operation

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Sammanfattning

Insatsen AMIB, African Mission in Burundi, deployerade i april 2003, efter eldupphöravtal mellan regeringen och olika rebellgrupper, med syfte att bland annat förbereda för en FN-insats. AMIB visar på att det tidigt fanns en ambition inom AU att aktivt delta i fredsfrämjande insatser. AMIB, som var en relativt liten insats, stabiliserade Burundi så pass att en FN-insats blev möjlig. Å andra sidan visar erfarenheterna från AMIB att det saknas både resurser och generell kapacitet inom AU och dess medlemsstater för att genomföra fredsfrämjande insatser. Detta var huvudanledningen till att AMIB inte kunde genomföra de uppgifter insatsen var satt att göra, vilket framför all påverkade DDR-processen. Finansieringsproblemen var också ett resultat av det internationella samfundets ovilja att stödja insatsen. Detta gällde även AU:s medlemsstater vilket ledde till att AMIB till stor del blev beroende av ett enda land, Sydafrika.

Nyckelord: AMIB, Afrikanska Unionen, Burundi, Sydafrika

Summary

The African Mission in Burundi, AMIB, was deployed in April 2003 after the signing of individual ceasefire agreements between the government and different rebel groups to, among other things, strive towards ensuring favourable conditions for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission. AMIB is a sign of the AU's early ambition to actively engage in peace support operations on its own continent. The relatively small mission that AMIB was managed to stabilize Burundi to such an extent that the UN thought it possible to take over. On the other hand, when it comes to resources and general capacity to conduct operations, AMIB provides an abundance of evidence that indicate serious gaps within the AU as an organization, and amongst its member states. For AMIB, this was the main reason for not being able to perform all its tasks properly, mostly affecting the DDR process. The funding problem of AMIB was also a result of the international community's unwillingness to support the mission. There was also an unwillingness to finance AMIB amongst the member states, leaving the mission dependent on one strong lead nation, South Africa.

Keywords: AMIB, African Union, Burundi, South Africa

Contents

Foreword	6
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Purpose, Method and Material	7
2 The historical context	8
2.1 Burundi	8
2.2 OAU and the AU.....	9
3 AMIB	11
3.1 Important experiences.....	15
3.1.1 Stabilizing the country	15
3.1.2 Failing DDR.....	15
3.1.3 Resources, Capacity and Funding.....	16
3.1.4 Lead Nation.....	17
4 Concluding Remarks	18
Bibliography	21
Interviews	23
Acronyms	24

Foreword

This report is an updated version of the earlier FOI Memo 2471 with the title *Lessons Learned from the African Union's first Peace Operation- The African Mission in Burundi*. The report was written under the auspices of Project Africa, a research programme at the Swedish Defence Research Agency's (FOI) Division of Defence Analysis. It is a part of a study series exploring the African Union as a regional peace and security actor. Project Africa is funded by the Department for International and Security Affairs (Fö/SI) in the Swedish Ministry of Defence.

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1 Introduction

The first Pan-African peacekeeping mission to take place was one in the Shaba province of Zaire, or what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in 1978-79.¹ Thereafter, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was involved in peace operations in Chad in 1979-82.² The African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was the first peace operation of the African Union (AU) and provided an early sign of the young organization's willingness to intervene on its own continent. AU has since then also taken on missions in Sudan, the African Union mission in Sudan (AMIS), in Somalia, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and most recently in the Comoros. It therefore seems that AU led peace operations are here to stay and they provide an important new tool in the quest for security and stability in Africa. However, since peacekeeping missions are a relatively new activity for the AU, the organization is not that old after all, it is important to analyze past operations in order to evolve and become better at performing peace operations. Studying past operations is also important from a donor/partner point of view since past experiences can guide future support of AU capacity building.

1.1 Purpose, Method and Material

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the African Mission in Burundi in order to increase the understanding of AU:s capacity as a peace and security organization. What was positive and negative from this peace operation experience and what can be learned for the future? This is mainly done as a descriptive synthesis analysis of secondary source material on AMIB. These findings are then used to compare the experiences of AMIB with the triangular area of tension that peace operations performed by the AU are operating in, namely the "AU's ambitions, the organisation's resources and capacity and the member states' political interests and will"³. The material used is mainly secondary sources, mostly academic articles and book chapters. As the literature on AMIB is limited, the secondary sources are complemented by interviews of present and former AU officials.

¹ Williams, Paul D., 'The African Union: Prospects for Regional Peacekeeping after Burundi and Sudan', *Review of African Political Economy*, 33:108 2006, p. 353

² Ibid.

³ Bogland et al, 'The African Union- A Study Focusing on Conflict Management', FOI report FOI-R-2475--SE 2008, p. 44

2 The historical context

Before going into the specifics of AMIB and what can be learned from that mission, one needs to look at the historical context in which AMIB operated. This involves not only the conflict history of Burundi, but also the evolution of AU as an actor in the field of peace and security.

2.1 Burundi⁴

The population of Burundi is made up of Hutus (85%) and Tutsis (15%). Since the independence 1962 the Tutsis have controlled the different power positions in the country. This has resulted in several Hutu rebellions taking place, which the Tutsi military have repressed in different ways. In 1972 the violence and the oppression had, according to some, reached genocide levels. Therefore, many Hutus were forced to flee to the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Tanzania. In 1987 president Buyoya seized power through a bloody coup, which once again led to repression of the Hutus. The refugee camps became a breeding ground for Hutu radicalism and in the beginning of the 1990s several rebel attacks were launched into Burundi. The different rebel groups stemmed from two different constellations, Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU) and National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD), which over the years were split into new fractions on several occasions.

When a multi party system was introduced in 1992, some attempts were made to run the country democratically. However, the assassination of the first democratically elected president, the Hutu Melchior Ndadaye, led to renewed violence. In 1996 Buyoya retook the power and governed the country with the support of the Tutsi military but eventually he started to also include Hutus in the government. In 1996 the first peace negotiations also took place, but it was not until 28 August 2000 that the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed. The agreement was, however, not completely comprehensive as some of the warring factions of the PALIPEHUTU and CNDD did not sign it. Instead, different ceasefire agreements were signed between the government and the remaining warring parties and it was not until 2006 that all rebel factions had sign an agreement with the government.

The conflict in Burundi must also be understood in a regional context. Burundi is part of the Great Lakes Region and is thus both affected by, and has affected the

⁴ The information in this passage is, when not referring to other sources, taken from the Uppsala University Conflict Database, <http://www.pcr.uu.se/database/conflictSummary.php?bcID=11>

other conflicts in that region, mainly in Rwanda and the DRC. Regarding Rwanda, many of the Burundian refugees took part in the genocide of the Tutsis. When Paul Kagame seized the power in Rwanda this on the other hand led fleeing Hutus to form alliances with Burundian Hutus.⁵ Moreover, the armed forces in Burundi and Rwanda have jointly fought the rebel forces, not only along their common border, but also in the DRC. Some rebel groups have on their part allied themselves with the army in DRC against the Burundian army. Thus, the conflicts in the Great Lakes Region are intertwined with one another.

2.2 OAU and the AU⁶

The precursor to the AU, the OAU, was established in May 1963. The charter of the OAU outlined that peace and security had to be established and maintained in Africa.⁷ At the same time, the charter underlined the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the individual member states, which was later on translated into a principle of non-intervention.⁸ OAU was also hampered by only being able to act when all member states had come to a consensus. This made the organization a weak actor when it came to security issues on the continent. Due to the political context it was operating in, the main focus of the OAU came to be the fight against apartheid and colonisation, and thus in 1994 when apartheid came to an end so did also the main purpose of the OAU.⁹

During the 1990s several conflicts, some of them already mentioned in the previous passage, struck the African continent. At the same time a wave of pan-africanism that not only promoted cooperation regarding security, but also the principles of democracy, accountability, good governance and political openness, swept the continent.¹⁰ It was in this context and spirit that the AU project was born in Sirte, Libya, in 1999. The Constitutive Act of the AU was later signed on 11 July 2000, with the following inauguration taking place in July 2002.

The AU as an organization works for political and economic cooperation between its member states hoping to decrease poverty, increase the respect for

⁵ Lemarchand, René, 'Burundi at a Crossroads' in Khadiagala, Gilbert M.(ed.), '*Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Lakes Region*', Lynne Rienner 2006, p. 48

⁶ For a more lengthy exposition of the African Union and conflict management see Bogland et al, 'The African Union'

⁷ Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter, preamble <http://www.oau-creation.com/OAU%20Charter.htm>

⁸ Murithi, Tim, 'The African Union's evolving role in peace operations: the African Union Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan and the African Union Mission in Somalia', *African Security Review*, 17:1 2008, p. 72

⁹ Bogland et al, 'The African Union', p. 13

¹⁰ Ibid.

the human rights and promote peace and democracy. The main difference from the OAU, apart from stronger institutions, is the condemning of non-constitutional governmental shifts and “the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity”.¹¹

An important organ of the AU is its Peace and Security Council (PSC), established in 2002 in accordance with the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. It is, among other things, responsible for the organisation’s peace operations.¹² The PSC was, however, not inaugurated until 2004, which is after AMIB took place. Instead, the deployment of AMIB was approved by the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) on 3 February 2003 and mandated by the same Organ on 2 April 2003. MCPMR was a structure set up under the OAU with the primary objective to anticipate and prevent conflicts.¹³ Then Secretary-General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, has said that the mechanism was to “undertake peacemaking and peacebuilding functions in order to facilitate conflict resolution”.¹⁴

¹¹ Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4h, http://www.africa-union.org/about_AU/AbConstitutive_Act.htm#Article4

¹² Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Article 3b, http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/organs/psc/Protocol_peace%20and%20security.pdf

¹³ Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution <http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Documents/Decisions/hog/3HoGAssembly1993.pdf>

¹⁴ Salim, Salim Ahmed, 'Localizing Outbreaks- The Role of Regional Organization in Preventive Action', in Cahill, Kevin (ed), *Preventive Diplomacy: stopping wars before they start*, BasicBooks 1996, p. 104

3 AMIB

In 1995 president Nyerere of Tanzania started mediating the Arusha Negotiations. When he died in 1999, former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela took over as a mediator and this marked the beginning of South Africa's involvement in the peace process.¹⁵ The negotiations eventually led to the Arusha Agreement in August 2000, mentioned above. Since the signing did not lead to a reduction of fighting, South Africa decided to deploy troops, the South African Protection Support Detachment (SAPSD), in October 2001. SAPSD was to act as a protection force for politicians, mainly Hutus, returning to the country to take part in the peace process. This force was intended to be multinational but the other contingents, from Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, did never arrive claiming that the situation remained too insecure.¹⁶

According to the Arusha agreement, the government of Burundi was to submit a request for a peacekeeping force to the United Nations (UN). However, as time passed with the signing of individual ceasefire agreements with different rebel groups, this imperative was changed. In the cease fire agreement signed in October 2002 it was instead agreed that the international mission could be either from the UN or the AU.¹⁷ When yet an agreement was signed with another rebel fraction in December 2002 it was stated that an "African mission shall be responsible for monitoring and verifying the ceasefire".¹⁸ The changing emphasis from the UN to an "African mission", in combination with an unwillingness within the UN to deploy a mission to Burundi when no comprehensive ceasefire agreement was in place, led to the deployment of the African Union Mission in Burundi in April 2003.

AMIB was mandated to operate for one year with the possibility of an extension by the Central Organ of MCPMR, pending the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force. The objectives of AMIB were to:

- "Oversee the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements";

¹⁵ South Africa's Peacekeeping Role in Burundi: Challenges and Opportunities for Future Peace Missions', *ACCORD Occasional Papers Series*, 2:2 2007, p.29
http://www.accord.org.za/op/OPS_vol2_no2_2007.pdf

¹⁶ Bellamy, Alex J., Williams, Paul D, 'Who's keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations', *International Security*, 29:4 2005, p. 190

¹⁷ Agoagye Festus, 'The African Mission in Burundi Lessons learned from the first African Union Peacekeeping Operation', *Conflict Trends*, 2:2004, p. 9 http://www.accord.org.za/ct/2004-2/CT2_2004%20PG9-15.pdf

¹⁸ Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie <http://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/725/12/pdf/N0272512.pdf?OpenElement>

- “Support disarmament and demobilisation initiatives and advise on reintegration of combatants”;
- Strive towards ensuring favourable conditions for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission; and
- “Contribute to political and economic stability in Burundi”.¹⁹

To be able to reach its objectives AMIB’s mandate consisted of the following tasks:

- “act as liaison between the parties;
- monitor and verify the implementation of the ceasefire agreement;”
- facilitate the activities of the committees responsible for the establishment of a New National Defence Force and Police Force;
- facilitate safe passage for the parties during their planned movement to the designated assembly areas;
- “secure identified assembly and disengagement areas;”
- “facilitate and provide technical assistance to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes;
- facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
- co-ordinate mission activities with the United Nations’ presence in Burundi; and
- provide VIP protection for designated returning leaders.”²⁰

This mandate was not backed with a strong enough possibility to use force though. The rules of engagement were based on self defence, and the use of force in other circumstances was only allowed to secure the freedom of movement of its own personnel and “to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence”.²¹ Despite the weakness of the mandate, the rules of engagement, and the code of conduct, they were, at least, clear and in accordance with international humanitarian law, the laws of armed conflict and the UN principles and standards.²²

AMIB consisted of both civilian and military components and was thus an integrated mission, amounting up to 3335 people from South Africa, Ethiopia

¹⁹ Communiqué of the ninety-first Ordinary Session of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution at Ambassadorial Level http://www.africa-union.org/News_Events/Communiqu%E9s/Communique_E9_20_Eng_2apr03.pdf

²⁰ Boshoff, Henry, Francis, Dara, ‘The Au Mission in Burundi -Technical and Operational Dimensions’, *African Security Review*, 12:3 2003, <http://www.issafrika.org/pubs/ASR/12No3/AWBoshoff.html>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Agoagye, ‘The African Mission in Burundi’, p. 12

and Mozambique.²³ However, at its height there were 3128 troops deployed in Burundi.²⁴ There were also small military observer contributions from Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Tunisia. The first to deploy was South Africa which was also the lead nation of the mission. This was done quite quickly since the South African Protection Support Detachment (SAPSD) – consisting of 700 troops – was already in Burundi. The main contributions of Ethiopia and Mozambique did, however, not deploy until September and October of 2003 respectively.²⁵ Thus, it took a long time before AMIB reached its planned troops levels. This was mainly due to economic restraints, but the fragility of the cease fire has also been mentioned as a causal factor.²⁶ Moreover, the AU had decided that the troop contributing countries were to be self-sustained for the first two month of deployment,²⁷ something few African troops contributing nations can achieve. This resulted in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) financing the deployments of Ethiopian and Mozambican troops respectively. Nevertheless, the concept of self-sustainment has become a recurrent part of AU's peace support operations (i.e. AMIS and AMISOM) and is referred to as the "AMIB Concept" or the "Burundi Model".²⁸

To finance the mission the AU set up a fund. The estimated cost for AMIB was US \$ 110 million for a year but at the end of its mandate the budget amounted to US\$ 134 million.²⁹ There were severe problems of finding the funding for these costs. The total amount of received pledges for funding were only about US\$ 50 million, and of these only about US \$ 10 million, excluding the US and UK support to Ethiopia and Mozambique, were actually placed in the trust fund.³⁰ This can be seen as an early sign of hesitation regarding donor support of AU missions.

Among the tasks included in the mandate, those dealing with the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process, as well as the security of the cantonment areas, were the most important of AMIB's mission.³¹ As a contributor to the DDR process, it was expected that AMIB would accommodate and disarm about 20 000 ex-combatants, which meant around 300 people a day.³²

²³ Ibid., p. 11

²⁴ Williams, 'The African Union', *Review*, p. 353

²⁵ Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 11

²⁶ Bellamy, Williams, 'Who's keeping the Peace?', p. 191

²⁷ Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 13

²⁸ Brigadier General Jaotody Jean de Matha, Head of the Operations and Support Unit within the Peace Support Operations Division of the AU.

²⁹ Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 13

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Boshoff, Francis, 'The Au Mission in Burundi'

³² Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 11

The first cantonment area for this purpose was established in June/July 2003, and a second one was not opened until May 2004.³³ At the first cantonment site, AMIB was only able to accommodate around 200 ex-combatants in total, due to the lack of resources to sustain them. Since there was limited food, infrastructure or medical supplies AMIB barely had the resources to support its own forces. Therefore, the EU started funding food supplies to the cantonment area in August 2003.³⁴ The German Technical Cooperation, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also donated money for this purpose. Despite lacking of resources, AMIB managed to fight off an attack on the cantonment area in the end of July 2003 and after this successful defence, no similar attempts or threats took place.

Apart from running the cantonment site, AMIB was involved in finding suitable areas for demobilisation centres and pre-disarmament assembly areas (PDAA), ending up in identifying 11 PDAA's. They also took part in the work of helping Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees to return home, and in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid as well as providing security for returning leaders.³⁵ AMIB also established a Civil Military Coordination Center (CIMICC) with the purpose of consulting with NGOs and humanitarian agencies on the matter of operational requirements of humanitarian delivery.

AMIB's deployment ended 31 May 2004 and was followed by the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) in accordance with the Security Council resolution 1545 of 21 May 2004. The former AMIB troops were rehatted and became the initial part of ONUB. During the initial period of ONUB the old AU troops were the only UN peacekeepers since the UN force generation process was delayed due to the member states' slow response to the request.³⁶ Contacts and cooperation with the UN had nevertheless been ongoing during the entire AMIB mission. The AU had pursued so called "strategic-level AU-UN engagement for the mobilisation of resources, as well as in-theatre administrative and logistical assistance from the UN system".³⁷ This assistance also included technical capacity support from the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) regarding public information, headquarters administration and DDR.

³³ AU opens new demobilization camp in central Burundi, BBC Monitoring Africa- Political Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, May 18 2004

³⁴ Boshoff, Henry, Vrey, Waldemar, 'A technical Analysis of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration- A Case Study from Burundi', *ISS Monograph Series*, No 125 2006, p. 25

³⁵ Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 14

³⁶ First Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi, S/2004/682 25 August 2004, p.8

³⁷ Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 14

3.1 Important experiences

Since AMIB was the first peace operation of the AU, it can be seen as a test case for AU's initial capability to conduct peace support operations. It is therefore of interest to try to identify a number of lessons that can be used when planning for future operations, as well as for donor support of capacity building measures.

3.1.1 Stabilizing the country

There are both positive and negative experiences worth mentioning when it comes to what one can learn from AMIB. First of all, AMIB is a sign of ambition from the AU members to deploy a mission when the UN is not able to, or does not want to, become involved, in this case because there was no comprehensive peace agreement signed.³⁸ A significance of AMIB is underlined by several commentators in the fact that once deployed, the mission was able to stabilize Burundi to such an extent that the UN saw a possibility to deploy its own mission.³⁹ This was done by providing security for leaders returning from exile and thus allowing the negotiation and the subsequent formation of a National Government.⁴⁰ While a number of the warring parties turned to criminality rather than political violence, on the whole the country was relatively stabilized during AMIB's time in the country.⁴¹ As an example, Agoagye estimates that around 95% of Burundi was relatively stable when AMIB ended its mission.⁴² Thus, one experience from AMIB is that a fairly small mission can make a contribution to bringing the parties together, thereby creating favourable conditions for stability, at least in the short run.

3.1.2 Failing DDR

Regarding the DDR process, which was one of the main tasks of AMIB, the outcomes are nevertheless less successful. As mentioned before, AMIB was suppose to disarm around 20 000 ex-combatants, but during its year of deployment it only managed to open one cantonment area. This was partly caused by the inability of the former warring parties to agree on issues regarding

³⁸ South Africa's Peacekeeping Role in Burundi, p. 29

³⁹ Ibid and Brigadier General Jaotody Jean de Matha

⁴⁰ Brigadier General Jaotody Jean de Matha

⁴¹ Bellamy, Williams, 'Who's keeping the Peace?', p. 192

⁴² Agoagye, 'The African Mission in Burundi', p. 14

the restructuring of the national army, which meant that the DDR process could not move forward. However, there was also a problem in the fact that AMIB did not have enough troops to safeguard the cantonment areas. The inability of AMIB to sustain the ex-combatants also contributed to the failure of the DDR process.

The positive impact of small missions, mentioned above in relation to the stability in the country, thereby did not translate into effective DDR processes which, in certain contexts, are more dependent on resources and man-power. One reason for the low number of soldiers was the slow deployment of soldiers from Ethiopia and Mozambique, which meant that South Africa had to operate by themselves for several months. Another reason could be that the total number of troops in the mandate was too low in relation to the tasks AMIB was supposed to perform.

3.1.3 Resources, Capacity and Funding

The problems mentioned above are all related to the lack of resources and capacity of AMIB. As the Secretary General of the UN put it in one of his reports: “the financial and logistic constraints under which AMIB is operating prevent the force from fully implementing its mandate”.⁴³ First of all, the AU members were not willing to fund AMIB to the extent that was needed.⁴⁴ One sign of this might be the decision of letting the troop contributing countries finance their first months of deployment by themselves, which, as mentioned before, led the US and the UK to pay for the deployment of Ethiopian and Mozambican troops. Secondly, the donations, apart from the just mentioned donations from the US and the UK, were scarce. The EU did eventually fund the food supplies for the 200 ex-combatants at the first cantonment area. In sum, the funding problem of AMIB, which prevented the mission from implementing its mandate, was a result of both the AU members’ lack of resources and capacity, as well as the international community’s unwillingness to support the mission.

One conclusion that has been drawn from this is that an AU mission must be able to survive on its own during the time it takes for donor contributions to come in place, which can take as long as six months.⁴⁵ Moreover, the African countries’ unwillingness to fund the mission has been mentioned as a reason for UN taking over the mission.⁴⁶ One scholar takes it as far as saying that “From a funding

⁴³ Report of the Secretary-General on Burundi, S/2004/210, 16 March 2004, p. 13

⁴⁴ Williams, ‘The African Union:’, p. 354

⁴⁵ Boshoff, Vrey, ‘A technical Analysis of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration’, p. 30

⁴⁶ Williams, ‘The African Union:’, p. 354

perspective, the only viable peacekeeping operations in Africa are UN peace operations”.⁴⁷ Thus, even though AMIB was able to stabilize Burundi and make way for a UN operation, the resource and funding problem has overshadowed this, sometimes to such an extent that the AU’s role as a peacekeeper has been questioned. However, it should at the same time be noted that the AU’s ambition is often only to act as a bridge before the larger international community is able to take over responsibility. Deploying a UN mission takes a long time and the AU therefore aims for rapid reaction capabilities in order to bridge the gap between outbreaks of violence and the international community’s response.

From an AU perspective another problem connected to the funding was the donor coordination. During the deployment of AMIB it was difficult for the AU to know what the donors contributed with to one given troop contributing country, thus sometimes leading to double reimbursement.⁴⁸

3.1.4 Lead Nation

Another interesting aspect of AMIB is South Africa’s role in making the mission a reality. As mentioned before, South Africa mediated the peace process and deployed troops to Burundi before AMIB. AMIB could not have become a reality without the resources and funding capacity of South Africa since it was very difficult to find other troop contributing countries and the AU did not have the necessary resources.⁴⁹ South Africa was “the largest force present on the ground, contributing approximately 1500 troops, which proved a determining factor for the deployment of the mission including maintenance and service of ageing equipment and an ageing force, training needs, logistics and procurement specific to PSOs”.⁵⁰ Thus, even though AMIB on the paper was an AU mission it was completely dependent on one single troop contributing country.

⁴⁷ de Coning, Cedric, ‘Towards A Common Southern African Peacekeeping System’, *CIPS Electronic Briefing paper*, 16:2004, p. 6 http://www.cips.up.ac.za/files/pdf/ebriefing/16-2004_Towards_a_Common_Southern_African_Peacekeeping_System.pdf

⁴⁸ Brigadier General Jaotody Jean de Matha

⁴⁹ Williams, ‘The African Union’, p. 353. Interview with Kwesi Aning 16 June 2008.

⁵⁰ South Africa’s Peacekeeping Role in Burundi: Challenges and Opportunities for Future Peace Missions, p. 31 http://www.accord.org.za/op/OPS_vol2_no2_2007.pdf

4 Concluding Remarks

One of the conclusions from an earlier AU study at the Swedish Defence Research Agency, is that when it comes to the organizations possibility to effectively engage in conflict management, there is a triangular area of tension “between the AU’s ambition, the organization’s resources and capacity and the member states’ political interests and will”.⁵¹ How can this be applied to AMIB?

The relatively small mission that AMIB was managed to stabilize Burundi to such an extent that the UN thought it possible to take over. Even though one reason for the UN taking over might have been the funding problems of AMIB, it still shows that a regional organization, in this case the AU, can pave the way for a UN mission when the conditions are not yet ripe for such an operation. Moreover, one has to bear in mind that AMIB was set up during a time when the AU was still in its infancy. The Peace and Security Council was not set up until after AMIB was launched, thereby leaving the AU with an old OAU mechanism for planning the mission. Another factor is that the deployment of AMIB took place despite the fact that it was seriously under funded and with only limited international support of donors. Having these factors in mind, AMIB is a sign of the AU’s early ambition to actively engage in peace support operations on its own continent.

When it comes to resources and general capacity to conduct operations, AMIB provides an abundance of evidence that indicate serious gaps within the AU as an organization, and amongst its member states. For AMIB, this was the main reason for not being able to perform all its tasks properly. This was made obvious when looking at the DDR process, which was seen as the most important part of the mission’s tasks. Instead of the planned 20 000 ex-combatants, AMIB only could take care of a couple of hundred. The only African country contributing substantially to the operation was South Africa. The limited support from the international community is a clear sign of is the donor community’s unwillingness to support and fund the mission. It took a lot of time and effort to get the donor support needed, and even with some limited funding it was not enough to fully implement the mandate of the mission.

Even if more substantial funding had become available it is not sure that the AU would have had the capacity to make use of all the resources. Due to understaffed headquarters and bureaucratic structures, the AU sometimes does not even have the capacity to take care of incoming donations. More money

⁵¹ Bogland et al, ‘The African Union- A Study Focusing on Conflict Management’, FOI report FOI-R-2475--SE 2008, p.44.

would not have solved the problem of effectiveness in the case of AMIB as there are many other areas of lacking capacity that cannot be resolved through quick fix donations. One should bear in mind that this was the first peace support operation of the AU and that many actors were still unsure about the new organisation. Since AMIB, the UN and the EU have substantially increased both their cooperation and support of the AU and its operations, and actively takes part in the organisation's capacity building programs.

Regarding the member states' will to engage, there are some question marks. There was not only a lack of resources but also an unwillingness to finance AMIB amongst the member states. This is first and foremost a sign of the lacking capacity and resources within the African countries, but it might also be a sign of a political unwillingness to deploy AMIB, or to become involved, in the first place. As mentioned before, AMIB is mostly a result of the South African will to deploy troops. Even though the other AU members agreed to the operation, it does not mean that the political will was very strong. One indication of this is the communiqué from the Central organ of MCPMR which shows that only representatives from South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique were present when AMIB was mandated.⁵² These were the only troop contributing countries, which makes the absence of other countries somewhat understandable, but it also shows how few countries actually were interested in contributing to AMIB in the first place.

The interest and will of the member states to deploy a mission is of great importance and related to the AU's idea of "African solutions to African problems". This is something that is underlined both from the AU and its partners, and that has been discussed on several occasions when it comes to peace support operations on the African continent – not the least when it comes to the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and its successor, the UN and AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In the case of AMIB, it rather seems to have been a South African solution to an African Problem. This should not be seen in a too negative way since an operation in Burundi was probably well needed. Still, it might become problematic when one single country influences an operation very much on its own, since it is making it possible to pursue its own agenda. In view of the fact that the force capability and resources of the AU members vary, it is not impossible that a similar situation occur again. Examples of the unequal distribution of power on the continent are also obvious in the Regional Economic Communities where, apart from South Africa's dominance in Southern Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Nigeria is

⁵² See Communiqué of the ninety-first Ordinary Session of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

completely dominant within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Then again, this is not something that applies only to the AU but also other international organizations. The EU operations in Chad and the DRC with strong French influences are but two examples. Also, for Dr Kwesi Aning, Head of Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution Department at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, strong lead nations are actually the way the AU should go in the future regarding peace operations. Since the AU as an organization does not have the money to set up missions, the organization might have to depend on one strong lead nation to be able to perform peace operations at all. Among the African countries Dr. Aning mentions South Africa and Nigeria as possible future lead nations.⁵³

In sum, AMIB can be said to have been a result of AU's ambition to engage in peace operations when the UN is not willing to do so, despite the fact that its mechanisms for such tasks were not in place. At the same time, the analysis shows a worrying lack of interest and will from the member states to contribute and participate, with the exception of South Africa, as well as a well known, yet serious, lack of resources and capacity. This combination limited the potential benefits of AMIB as the operation managed to stabilize the country, but then failed to conduct the important process of DDR.

⁵³ Interview with Dr Kwesi Aning, 16 June 2008

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Acronyms

AMIB	African Mission in Burundi
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CIMICC	Civil Military Coordination Center
CNDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MCPMR	Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution
MONUC	United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
PALIPEHUTU	Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People
PDAA	Pre-Disarmament Assembly Areas
PSC	Peace and Security Council
SADC	the Southern African Development Community
SAPSD	South African Protection Support Detachment
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation