

UN Support to African Union–Led Peace Support Operations: What Next for Resolution 2719?



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN Security Council Resolution 2719, adopted unanimously in December 2023, is an important victory for those who have been advocating for more sustainable and predictable financing for African Union–led peace support operations (AU PSOs). While the Security Council has previously provided AU missions with access to UN assessed contributions on an exceptional basis, Resolution 2719 helps to regularize this process, outlining a series of steps for joint UN-AU planning and authorization by the two councils.

The UN and AU now need to operationalize the resolution. This will require clarifying several elements. First, clarity is needed on what is required to trigger the initial joint planning process and on the level of oversight the Security Council should maintain over missions authorized under the resolution. Second, considering that the resolution caps financing through UN assessed contributions at 75 percent, there are questions over how to close the 25 percent financing gap. Third, it is unclear how UN financing regulations and rules will be adapted to fit the needs of AU-led PSOs, what the reimbursement rates will be for contributing countries, and how the UN and AU can work together in creating and managing mission budgets. Finally, it remains to be determined what types of AU-led missions the resolution might be used to finance.

Coordination among the AU Commission, UN Secretariat, AU Peace and Security Council, and UN Security Council will also be critical to operationalizing Resolution 2719. The AU and UN have established mechanisms to facilitate technical and political engagement as part of their partnership on peace and security, which will continue to support policy harmonization and

joint decision making to achieve the objectives of Resolution 2719. However, Resolution 2719 may necessitate refining these mechanisms and establishing new ones, requiring innovation from both organizations. An important next step is to map out the appropriate coordination mechanisms and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each organization and their respective departments. However, for the resolution to be implemented successfully, these coordination mechanisms need to be used more practically, not simply as a formality.

Another critical question is what will be the first test case for operationalizing Resolution 2719. The AU and UN share a strong commitment to ensuring the success of the first case, since it will inform the future joint authorization of missions. While many are cautious about discussing specific cases, pressing security needs and expectations raised by the adoption of the resolution have spurred discussions about potential test cases, including Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan.

Ultimately, discussions on the resolution's implementation are inherently political. When council members adopted the resolution, they recognized that some operational elements would require further negotiation. The council will ultimately decide on these operational details and on the test cases based on political considerations. This means that the success of the resolution will rest on the council's ability to overcome geopolitical divisions.

To read the full policy paper visit: <https://bit.ly/3ZmYL3j>



Joint planning and coordination

- 1. The UN Secretariat and AU Commission should finish and roll out joint planning guidelines and detailed modalities.** The guidelines should clarify what is required to trigger the initial planning process and specifics on joint planning, budgeting, reporting, and roles and responsibilities.
- 2. The UN Security Council should clarify the level and type of oversight it intends to maintain over AU-led PSOs initiated through Resolution 2719.** It should ensure that measures for oversight, such as reporting requirements, do not become unnecessarily burdensome on AU-led PSOs.
- 3. The UN Security Council and AU PSC should develop modalities for coordinating and making decisions on any potential AU-led PSO for which Security Council authorization and UN assessed funding are being sought.** In addition to strengthening formal council-to-council engagement, this may also include new mechanisms to facilitate regular interaction at the expert level.
- 4. The AU and regional economic communities (RECs) need to further standardize, institutionalize, and streamline their processes for mandating and coordinating the deployment of missions.** This would help ensure that regional organizations complement each other at the continental level and when engaging the UN.
- 5. The work of the three African members of the Security Council (A3) should be guided by a clear strategy for engaging with the five permanent members and the other elected members.** In addition, the A3 will need to continue holding informal discussions with member states outside of the council.

Burden sharing

- 6. UN and AU member states, together with the EU and other donors, should discuss in greater detail how to cover the 25 percent funding gap.** While funding modalities to cover the 25 percent gap will vary by context, member states should not wait until a mission is needed to map out viable solutions, as this could derail planning processes.
- 7. The UN Security Council should further clarify what is meant by its commitment to consider “all viable options” if faced with a significant shortfall of funding.** In particular, it should clarify whether this includes additional UN assessed contributions beyond the 75 percent cap.

Capacity building

- 8. The AU should begin building the capacity of its Peace Support Operations Division and the Permanent Observer Mission of the AU to the UN.** These institutions require more personnel to backstop missions under the AU’s command and control and to fulfill planning, oversight, and reporting requirements.
- 9. The UN Secretariat may need to enhance the capacity of various departments.** Depending on the outcomes of the task force led by DPO, this could include greater rapid planning capacity within DPO and additional capabilities within the UN Office to the AU.

Regulations and rules

- 10. The UN General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Body on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in coordination with the Department of Operational Support, should consider how to adapt UN regulations and rules to fit the needs of AU-led PSOs.** This includes consideration of AU-specific personnel- and contingent-owned equipment reimbursement systems and procurement processes that are designed to meet the needs of kinetic environments.
- 11. The UN and AU should establish modalities for a joint budgeting process to be approved by the General Assembly.** This would allow the UN and AU to jointly present the mission budget to the General Assembly through the ACABQ and Fifth Committee.