

The AU's New conception of Security and the Case of AMIS in Darfur: Human vs. State Security

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The African Union (AU) has been conceived as a tool for the achievement of a *Pax Africana* where not only the preservation of states, but also the protection of human beings, is the main objective. The creation of the AU therefore constitutes the culmination of a decade of efforts for the emergence of a new conception of security (a new vision of the referent security object and of the threats to deal with). By embracing new concepts like the *Responsibility to Protect*, *human security* or *peacebuilding*, Africans have embraced an international discourse that can be described as *post-Westphalian*.^[1] In many ways, one can consider that the AU has copied the international/western standards in the field of multilateral interventions.

The objective of this proposal to disentangle rhetoric from practice by verifying the implementation of these concepts through concrete initiatives. We will use the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) as a case study. As of 2004, Darfur indeed became the place where the credibility of the AU was to be assessed.

Through this example, we will argue that African actors are still trying to reconcile peace operations with their own political and ideological preferences, in particular the defence of their state and regime. The AU has failed to protect citizens and the overall objective of the mission has always remained the preservation of the Sudanese state. We will also study the motivations of intervening actors and thereby show how peace operations offer African third states an opportunity to protect or reinforce their own regime.

In conclusion, the lessons of AMIS will be confronted with other examples of African operations. We will refer to AU interventions in the Comoros and Somalia which show the resilience of the state as the main object to protect, but also to missions in Burundi and the Central African Republic which demonstrate the difficulties –and in some ways the lack of interest- of African actors for peacebuilding type missions.

[1] See Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, 2nd edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2010.