

# Democracy, the state and conflict in Africa



**6. THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) – MORE  
THAN A PAPER TIGER? AN AFRICAN  
RESPONSE TO AFRICA’S PROBLEMS  
MAY, 3, 2021, 12-13.30**

## **Structure of my presentation**

- 1. The African Union (AU)**
- 2. Aims, institutions and the logic of integration  
EU and AU-Institutions in comparison**
- 3. Instruments and organs of the Peace and Security Council  
(PSC)**
- 4. Conclusions**
- 5. The COVID-19 pandemic in Africa**



- **6. THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) – MORE THAN A PAPER TIGER? AN AFRICAN RESPONSE TO AFRICA’S PROBLEMS**
- Williams, Paul D., 2011: The African Union’s Conflict Management Capabilities, in: The Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 32 pp.
- Group work:
- **Most Western societies and many experts believe that the Covid19 pandemic is a catastrophe for Africa. Did this really happen? Did African countries receive some support from external counties or institutions?**
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## 1. The African Union (AU)

**Kwame Nkrumah: “United States of Africa”: Pan-Africanist vision**

**Replaced the Organization for African Unity (1963): a child of its time...financial contributions.....passive; 1990s saw minor reforms**

**„Club of Dictators“, show-elements**

**Achievement: borders intact, identity**

**Many regional organizations and co-operations: mainly “Paper-tigers”**

**Why integration? Economic gains, too small markets,  
Many violent conflicts as an obstacle to development**



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## The African Union (AU)

- **Founded on July 8, 2002 in Durban/South Africa, legal successor of OAU**
- **Membership: 53 states, Morocco became member late (2017); North Africa included**
- **Key role for Gaddafi (Sirte meeting): far-reaching visions**
- **South Africa – Nigeria axis as a motor of integration**





## **2. Aims, institutions and the logic of integration Politics and Development**

### **Constitutive Act, Art. 3:**

- **Human rights, promote democratic principles and institutions popular participation and good governance**
- **Gender equality**
- **Support for the New Partnership of Africa's development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism, APRM)**



## **Peace and Security**

- **“Promote peace, security, and stability” (Art. 3)**
- **Non-interference ...in internal affairs. (Art 4g)**
- **Right to intervene in cases of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity: “we are replacing the principle of non-interference with the principle of non-indifference” (Said Djinni) – new security doctrine (Art. 4h)**

***„Our cooperation will continue to build on our common values and goals in pursuit of good governance, democracy and the rule of law. We firmly condemn all unconstitutional changes of governments which, alongside bad governance, are one of the main causes of instability. We are united in the fight against impunity at national and international level and the protection of human rights on both continents“ (3rd AU-EU Meeting, Tripoli Declaration)“***



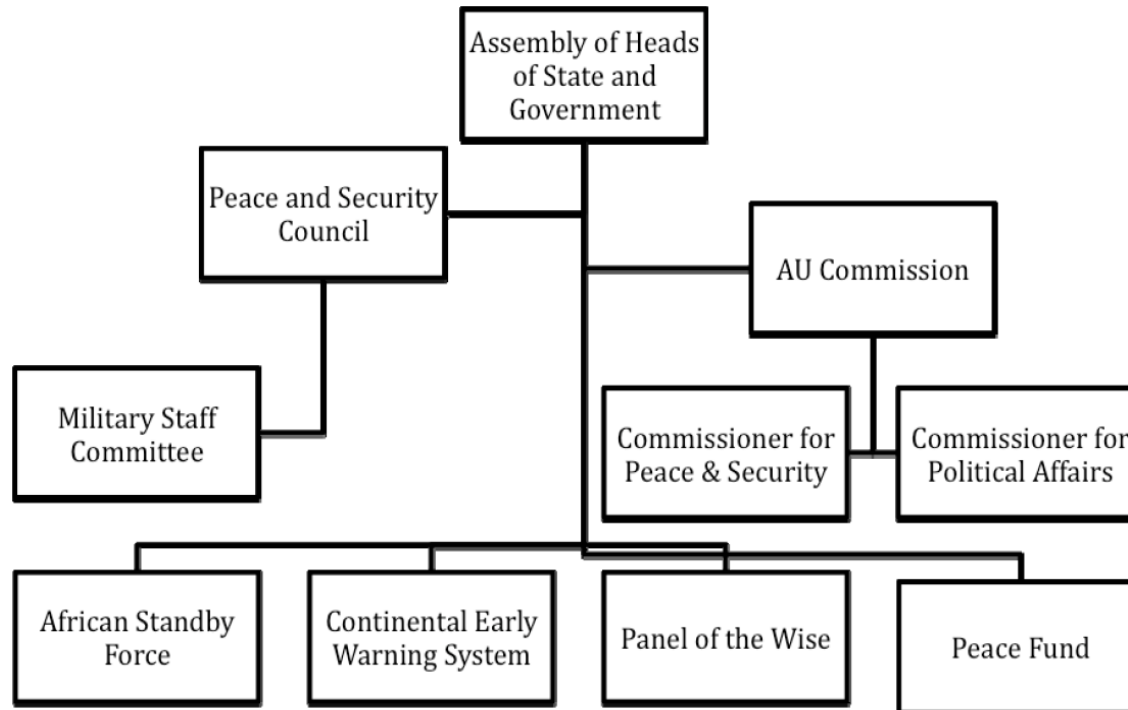
## Organization of the AU

- **decision-making, no veto-right**
- **Budget: South Africa, Nigeria, Libya and Algeria....**
- **Pan-African Parliament (PAP) in Cape Town, delegates,**
- **Diaspora with seats**



## Institutionell AU-Architecture (Williams 2011)

Figure 1: Principal Institutions of the African Peace and Security Architecture



- **AU-Institutions mirror the EU-Institutions**
- **differences**

**Table 1: Comparison between AU and EU institutions (see Schmidt 2015)**

<b>African Union institutions</b>	<b>Functional logic Decision-making</b>	<b>EU institutions</b>	<b>Functional logic Decision-making</b>
<b>Assembly of Heads of States and Governments</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Two-thirds majority</b>	<b>EU Council (Heads of States and Governments)</b>	<b>Intergovernmental unanimity</b>
<b>Executive Council</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Two-thirds majority</b>	<b>Council of Ministers/The Council</b>	<b>Intergovernmental</b> - <b>Absolute majority</b> - <b>Qualified majority</b> - <b>unanimity</b>
<b>Pan-African Parliament</b>	<b>Supranational, two-thirds majority</b>	<b>European Parliament</b>	<b>Supranational Absolute majority in most cases</b> <b>Co-decision</b> <b>Veto position</b>
<b>The Committee of Permanent Representatives</b>	<b>Negotiating body</b>	<b>The Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)</b>	<b>Negotiating body</b>
<b>African Court of Justice</b>	<b>Supranational, limited responsibilities</b>	<b>European Court of Justice</b>	<b>Supranational “Guardian of the Treaties”</b>
<b>African Union Commission</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	<b>European Commission</b>	<b>supranational</b>
<b>Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)</b>	<b>Advisory body</b>	<b>Economic and Social Committee</b>	<b>Advisory body</b>

## EU as a key supporter of the AU

- **Aim: strengthen AU capacities; *EU Support Program to the African Union: 55 Million Euro for 2007 up to 2013* for the AU-Commission, European Peace Facility 300m Euro, total EU-support over one billion!**
- ***Twining-Program* for exchange on expert level between administrators in Brussels and Addis Ababa**
- **Nyerere-Student-Exchange-Program for exchange between African universities :**
- **Joint Expert Groups (JEGs) for developing the partnership between AU and EU**
- **Currently: slow progress, disillusionment?**

### **3. Instruments and organs of the Peace and Security Council (PSC)**

- **Rotating membership (2 years)**
- **Established in May 2004, permanent organ of 15 members by a protocol**
- **Central part of an African security architecture**
- **Decisions require 2/3 majorities**
- **Standby-Force with 15.000 troops up to 2010 via five regional brigades (not realized yet)**
- **Continent-wide early warning system with „situation room“**
- **Peace Fund underfinanced**
- **PSC, works in a similar way to the United Nations Security Council.**
- **Interventionist approach and military engagement: hybrid missions in cooperation with other actors (UN, EU, USA)**
- **Concrete conflict management: Supervise, observe, monitor and verify the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.....**



- Continental Early-Warning system
- Objective: Analysing and recommendation for future conflicts
- Less information from memberstates
- Interopertibility

## 4. Conclusions

The AU is an ambitious and historically unprecedented effort by weak states

Compared with the OAU, African unity has made great progress

Stronger regional co-operation between North- and Sub-saharan Africa

Organizationally is combines elements from the EU and the UN

Despite the fact, that the institutions are still in their infancy the AU intervened militarily in large-scale and difficult conflicts with some success, legitimacy

Conflict management: The AU monitors, and evaluates achievements in terms of democracy, good governance, and rule of law

African Union and Regional Organisations have more legitimacy than by international organization, such as the EU, but the AU is too weak, partly ineffective - dilemma

## Difficulties

- **Working Institutions? Capabilities?**
- **Military capacities of most countries are very limited, (“military unpreparedness, under-resourced” (Williams 2011: 21)**
- **Hybrid missions are by no means perfect, but are a chance to escape capacity problems**
- **To avoid a gap between expectations and reality, more progress is necessary (African Stand-by force, budget etc.)**
- **Danger of rhetorical consensus, passivity with respect to autocratic regimes**
- **Security issues: training necessary (by UN-support)**
- **More research necessary, information insufficient for analyzing the new institutions**



- **No common answer to the refugee crisis...responsibility.....**
- **AU is dependent on donors, especially on EU resources, tension between the two institutions**
- **The APRM (African Peer Review) is behind expectations, whether the „lame duck“ could be revitalized, is not clear at the moment, reviews with effects?**
- **The AU has become more passive through the last years due to the absence of strong leadership and**

## Optimism?

- **All actors: Europeans, UN, AU and states are confronted with many new challenges, learning process?**
  - **political will co-operation and conflict-management is limited**
  - **Relatively strong group: largely unwilling to surrender sovereignty**
- 
- **Will we witness the United States of Africa? Will norms be transcended into politics? It seem kind of a utopian idea...**

## 5. The COVID-19 pandemic in Africa

Head lines, WHO etc.

Expectations: severe impact on Africa, extremely high numbers of infectes, catastrophe

- **In general Covid19- effect was only modest: infection rate comparable low death rate (at that time 2020) relatively modest infection rates (except South Africa)**

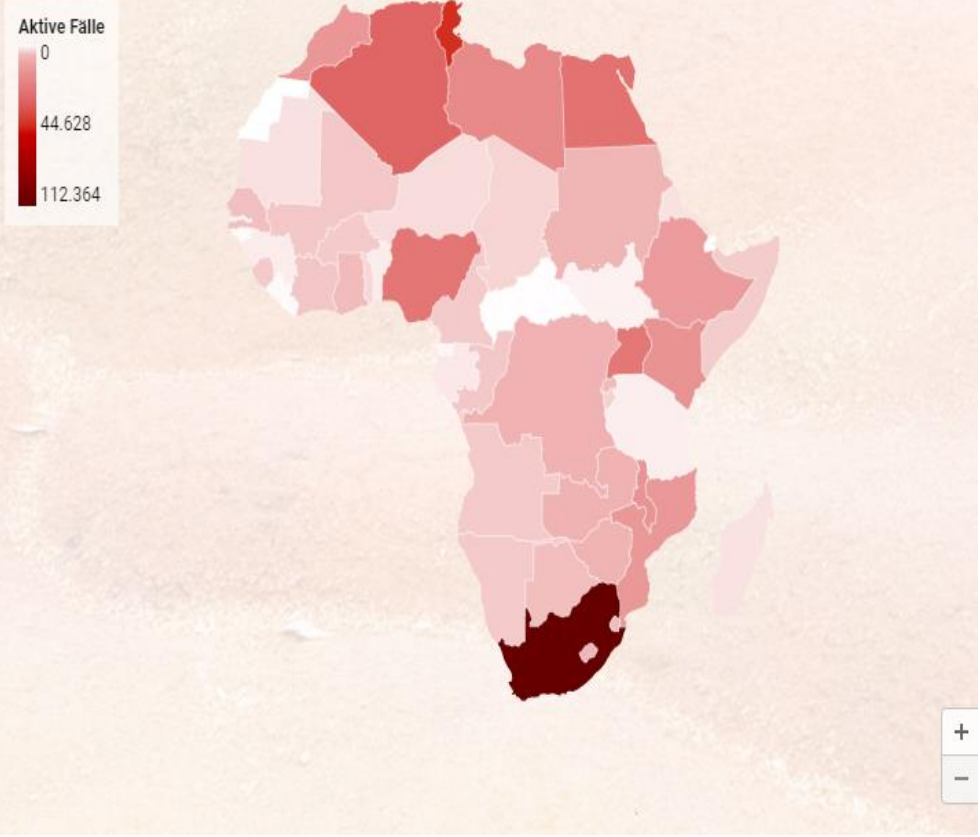
Some: Reasons

- Young societies: where 70% of the population are under the age of 30 %and around 5% aged 65 or over, less of a lethal threat
- Climate, high temperature
- Often remote villages, empty spaces
- Experience by illnesses or pandemics – Ebola
- Strict lockdowns, police brutality, force
- Huge differences between countries, special case South Africa (industrialized!)

- physical distancing, intensive hygiene routines, travel restrictions, and shutdown have slowed the speed of the spread and reduced the pressure on healthcare systems, as observed in other countries
- But only basic health system, oxygen machines, hand washing, testing...not available, “dark spots”



**Afrika gesamt:** 3.553.904 Fälle bestätigte Infektionen (+0,5% zum Vortag), 90.452 Todesfälle (+0,7%), 3.033.281 Genesene (+0,6%), 430.171 aktive Fälle (-0,4%)





## The COVID-19 pandemic

- political, social and economic consequences may more negative impacts than the actual virus
- Long-term effects, challenges
- Pressure on health care – „normal“ illnesses: Malaria, yellow fever, HIV...neglected medication
- Economic pressures: unemployment, food insecurity, increasing debts, tourism is in stand still
- Steep rise of unemployment: informal sector, such as street trading and open markets, compensate the loss of income

## Support for Africa

Private donations, charity:

- Chinese billionaire, Jack Ma has donated a total of 1.1 million testing kits, six million masks and 60,000 protective suits
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will provide up to 100 million dollars to improve detection, isolation and treatment efforts and protect

Multilateral donors:

- UN launched a two-billion-dollar coordinated global humanitarian response
- EU announced 15 billion Euros to fight the virus in highly infected regions
- Debt reliefs

Covax-initiative, global

Bilateral donors

e.g. Germany (520 € Employment, social protection), France: Debt cancellations, special relieve measures

- no „one-size-fits-all response“
- Negative long term impact: poverty, unemployment, social and political unrest, destabilizing democratic (collapsed state?) and even more countries could become more autocratic

**Thank you very much for your patience.**

**I am looking forward to receiving questions  
and discuss with you.**