



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY


МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ

DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2023-23-2-307-321

EDN: KHDBJR

Research article / Научная статья

The UN — African Union Partnership on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: Frameworks, Policies and Strategies

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Abstract. A strong partnership between the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) is essential to achieve strategic convergence, coherence and effective solutions to Africa's complex peace and security challenges. This article analyzes the key challenges in the UN — AU partnership for peacekeeping, including the UN — AU frameworks, policies and strategies in implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda to establish equal, full and constructive participation of women in the peacekeeping process. The authors identify key challenges in the UN — AU partnership for peacekeeping and assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms and tools of this partnership in the field of maintaining peace and security. The implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa in 2003—2022 is discussed in detail. The empirical basis for the research was drawn from the UN peacekeeping website database, official AU documents, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, and AU and UN statistics on the gender composition of key UN peacekeeping missions during the period under review. This study employs quantitative methods of assessment and comparative analysis of UN and the AU statistics on women's participation in African peacekeeping from 2003 to 2022. It focuses on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as a case study. The article concludes that there is a direct link between the deteriorating security situation in Africa, the effective implementation of the WPS agenda, and the level of strategic partnership between the UN and the AU.

Key words: United Nations, African Union, the AU, gender balancing, Woman, Peace and Security Agenda, MINUSMA

Conflicts of interest. The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgements. The paper was funded by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation (Project No. 23-28-01195).

Authors' contribution. The research concept was conceived by S.A. Bokeriya, who also undertook the tasks of data collection, processing, and analysis, as well as writing the text of the article; A. Kiamba contributed to the writing of the article.

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For citation: Bokeriya, S. A., & Kiamba, A. (2023). The UN — African Union partnership on the Women, Peace and Security agenda: Frameworks, policies and strategies. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 23(2), 307—321. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2023-23-2-307-321>

Партнерство ООН и Африканского союза в реализации повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность»: политика, форматы и стратегии

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Аннотация. Устойчивое партнерство между Организацией Объединенных Наций (ООН) и Африканским союзом (АС) имеет важное значение для принятия эффективных решений в отношении сложных проблем мира и безопасности в Африке. Анализируются основные проблемы партнерства ООН и АС в области миротворчества, рамки, политика и стратегии ООН и АС в реализации повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность» в целях обеспечения равного, полного и конструктивного участия женщин в миротворческом процессе. В исследовании определяются ключевые вызовы в партнерстве ООН и АС по поддержанию мира и оценивается эффективность механизмов и инструментов партнерства ООН и АС в области поддержания мира и безопасности, а также реализации повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность» в Африке в 2003—2022 гг. Эмпирической базой исследования послужили базы данных веб-сайта ООН по поддержанию мира, официальные документы Африканского союза, резолюции Генеральной Ассамблеи (ГА) и Совета Безопасности (СБ) ООН, статистические данные АС и ООН по гендерному составу ключевых миротворческих миссий ООН в указанный период. В результате анализа отобранного набора документов авторы определили динамику проведения миротворческих операций ООН, гендерный состав миссий ООН, а также эффективность реализации повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность» в Многопрофильной комплексной миссии Организации Объединенных Наций по стабилизации в Мали (МИНУСМА). На основе количественных методов оценки и сравнительного анализа статистики ООН и АС по участию женщин в африканской миротворческой деятельности в 2003—2022 гг. с акцентом на МИНУСМА в качестве примера делается вывод о наличии прямой зависимости между ухудшением ситуации с безопасностью в Африке, реализацией повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность» и уровнем стратегического партнерства между ООН и АС.

Ключевые слова: ООН, Африканский союз, АС, гендерный баланс, Женщины, мир и безопасность, МИНУСМА

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Благодарности. Исследование выполнено за счет гранта Российского научного фонда (проект № 23-28-01195).

Вклад авторов. С.А. Бокерия принимала участие в разработке концепции исследования, сборе, обработке и анализе полученных данных, а также написании текста статьи; А. Киамба принимала участие в написании текста статьи.

Для цитирования: Бокерия С.А., Киамба А. Партнерство ООН и Африканского союза в реализации повестки дня «Женщины, мир и безопасность»: политика, форматы и стратегии // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2023. Т. 23, № 2. С. 307—321. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2023-23-2-307-321>

Introduction

The cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) is based on the fact that these organizations can

assist each other with their different respective strengths in achieving their common goals of maintaining peace and security in Africa (Bokeriya, 2022). The UN — AU strategic partnership began in 2002 with the

establishment of the AU. Despite the bilateral relations formed between the two organizations and their participants, certain challenges arise in the process of implementing joint actions to conduct peacekeeping missions. These difficulties present themselves both at the strategic level — issues in developing political strategies, agreeing on joint projects and lack of funding — and at the operational level, such as the timely provision of resources and improving the professionalism of military and civilian personnel.

Although successful collective missions have been executed within the framework of the UN — AU strategic partnership (De Coning, 2019; Williams & Boutellis, 2014; Hendricks, 2017; Weiss & Welz, 2014), as well as in specific areas, including mediation, the Silencing the Guns initiative,¹ and the growing role of women in African peacekeeping, the UN — AU interaction is still marked by tensions, unequal diplomatic capacity, varying degrees of political influence, and insufficient cooperation in peacebuilding and post-conflict resolution (Williams & Boutellis, 2014; Forti & Singh, 2019). These issues hinder the efficient implementation of strategies aimed at maintaining peace and security in Africa's conflict zones.

Research on women's peacekeeping falls into three main groups, which could significantly strengthen the UN — AU cooperation. The first group comprises studies that analyze the process of stereotyping women in peacekeeping, the emergence of limitations and obstacles to the development of women's peacemaking (DeGroot, 2001), and the problematic issues of integrating women in peacekeeping missions (Alchin, Gouws & Heinecken, 2018). In particular, they focus on

¹ The Silencing the Guns initiative is one of the key projects within the framework of the AU's Agenda 2063, which aims to prevent violent conflicts, wars, gender-based violence and genocide. See: *Silencing the Guns: A Developmental Approach* // UNDP. February 23, 2022. URL: <https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/silencing-guns-developmental-approach> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

recruitment processes, the self-perception of female soldiers, and sexual violence. The second group includes studies that assess the contributions of both women and men in peacekeeping, focusing primarily on gender issues in peacekeeping (Bridges & Horsfall, 2009; Mazurana, 2003). The third group explores key UN documents that regulate women's empowerment within peacekeeping missions (Olsson & Gizelis, 2015).

This article aims to fill a research gap on the challenges and prospects of joint implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by the UN and the AU. The case study utilized is the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), a mission that provides both a platform for interaction between organizations and illustrates the contradictions inherent in the UN — AU partnership.

To achieve the primary objective of the article — to examine the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in the field of peacekeeping, particularly women's peacekeeping, based on the research of peacekeeping operations in Africa — the authors established a data set related to the UN and the AU for the period 2003—2022. The data set includes: the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on African conflicts, the AU and the UN gender composition statistics of key UN peacekeeping missions in 2003—2022, and AU and the UN documents on the WPS agenda.

Through the analysis of the collected documents, the authors determined the dynamics of UN peacekeeping operations over the specified period, the gender composition of the UN missions, and the effectiveness of the WPS agenda's realization in MINUSMA. These documents provide a comprehensive understanding of the specifics of the UN and the AU peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as the challenges and prospects of implementing the WPS agenda.

To construct the specific dataset for analysis, the authors identified and examined the electronic versions of 54 UNSC resolutions adopted from 2003 to 2022, obtained from the UN Digital Library. Based on this data, the authors conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the UN peacekeeping operations, the gender composition of peacekeeping missions, and problems in the WPS implementation in MINUSMA. Using the case of Mali, the authors sought to explore the practical aspects of the UN — AU cooperation in peace and security and the inclusion of WPS in African missions.

The African Union — United Nations Peacemaking Partnership: Challenges and Prospects

According to the UN Secretary General A. Guterres, “The partnership between the UN and the AU on peace and security is fundamental to building a safer world for all.”² At the same time, it is clear that solving the complex problems of peacekeeping requires specific missions tailored to particular situations, including counter-terrorism operations and peacekeeping through military force. Partnership with the AU and sub-regional organizations provides the UN with opportunities to achieve this goal.

The UNSC recognizes the AU’s increasing role in peace and security and advocates for a more cohesive partnership between the UN and the AU in areas such as rapid response, conflict prevention and resolution, and combating violent extremism and terrorism.³

Throughout the period 2005—2015, the UNSC emphasized the role of regional

organizations, particularly the AU, in responding to crimes against humanity,⁴ human trafficking, and conflict-related sexual violence. The aim was to develop, in cooperation with African regional organizations, a rapid response system to contemporary regional and global security threats⁵ posed by criminal and terrorist networks, piracy, and radical armed non-state groups.⁶

The UN — AU partnership is characterized by mutual complementarity, with a relationship built on hybrid missions. In these missions, a regional organization, particularly the AU, shares political, financial, logistical, and military burdens with the UN (Romadan & Shagalov, 2015). In hybrid missions, partners are theoretically equal and align their agendas to fulfil the mandate. According to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, when resolving crises, the UNSC relies on the AU and regional economic communities, which are the first to take measures to stabilize conflicts in states.⁷ A prime example of a hybrid mission is the African Union — United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

Simultaneously, African regional actors are guided in their actions by the legitimacy of the UNSC and rely on financial assistance and support from international partners, African states and institutions conducting peace operations in Africa (De Coning, Gelot & Karlsrud, 2016).

⁴ Resolution 1674 (2006). Adopted by the Security Council at its 5430th meeting, on 28 April 2006 // UN Digital Library. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/573969> (accessed: 06.03.2023).

⁵ Resolution 2195 (2014). Adopted by the Security Council at its 7351st meeting, on 19 December 2014 // UN Digital Library. 2014. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/785567> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

⁶ Cooperation between the UN and regional and subregional organizations — Security Council, 7439th meeting // UN Web TV. May 11, 2015. URL: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/klj/kljpd9fxk> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

⁷ United Nations Charter // United Nations. URL: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

² Guterres: the UN — AU partnership is necessary for a more safe world // TASS. January 28, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/4909584> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³ Resolution 2195 (2014). Adopted by the Security Council at its 7351st meeting, on 19 December 2014 // UN Digital Library. 2014. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/785567> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

The UN stresses the importance of cooperation with the AU to stabilize and resolve conflicts in Africa. This concern is reflected in the reports of the UN Secretary General, which focus on strengthening the strategic partnership between the UN and the African Union and on mediation efforts, specifically, on Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on mediation (2015),⁸ and on Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (2016).⁹

The central driving force of the UN — AU partnership is the cooperation between the UNSC and the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC), which has executive decision-making powers regarding peace and security issues (Sidorova, 2021). The first joint consultation between the UNSC and the AU PSC took place in 2007 (Forti & Singh, 2019). The AU PSC is the only authorized body that systematically involves the UN Security Council in peacekeeping activities.

A significant achievement in the cooperation between the UN and the AU is the UNSC Resolution 1809 (2008),¹⁰ which helped strengthen the UN — AU partnership to address

common tasks to ensure collective security on the African continent and to create a fund for financing operations.

Despite the progress made, the partnership between the two Councils is characterized by an unequal relationship since these two organizations differ in terms of power, authority, political status, and resource availability (Forti & Singh, 2019). Their cooperation is quite intense; however, the two organizations are becoming increasingly complementary. Focusing its efforts on maintaining international peace and security, the UNSC pays significant attention to problems in Africa: 50% of the UNSC country-specific meetings in 2018 focused on Africa (Forti & Singh, 2019).

The UN has succeeded in strengthening peace processes and concluding peace treaties, but has fallen short in applying enforcement measures. As a result, the AU is prepared to conduct operations to combat terrorism but lacks the functional capabilities to implement peace agreements (De Coning, 2019). For instance, since 2007, the AU and subregional organizations rapidly stabilized situations in Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Mali (Darkwa, 2016, p. 69). Subsequently, the UN conducted peacekeeping operations in these countries. For this purpose, African military and police personnel who had participated in AU operations in these conflict-ridden states became the UN peacekeepers. The opposite situation was observed in Somalia: the UNSC authorized law enforcement, but the AU was the first to deploy peacekeeping operations, took control of them, and conducted them with logistical support provided by the UN and other partners (De Coning, 2019). In this context, there is a certain hierarchy in the relationship between the UN and the AU, since the AU, as a regional organization, implements law enforcement and combat tasks following UNSC authorization.

A striking example of effective cooperation between the UN and the AU is the maintenance

⁸ Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on mediation: report of the Secretary-General // UN Digital Library. 2015. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/804636?ln=ru> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

⁹ Report of the Secretary General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union // UN Security Council Report. September 13, 2016. URL: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_780.pdf (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹⁰ Resolution 1809 (2008). Adopted by the Security Council at its 5868th meeting, on 16 April 2008 // UN Security Council. April 16, 2008. URL: <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1809> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

of the peace process in the CAR following the 2017 AU Peace and Security Council's (AUPSC) approval of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR.¹¹ According to the Initiative, alongside the Economic Community of Central African States, supported the AU Commission's efforts to mediate between the CAR government and 14 armed groups. In turn, the UNSC contributed to resolving the crisis in the CAR by creating a UN mission (MINUSCA) to implement mediation efforts and provide logistical support.¹²

Both Councils were effectively involved in the integration of two parallel mediation processes initiated by Sudan in the second half of 2018. The UN and the AU provided support to the parties to the conflict. In particular, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) field staff supported the establishment of a new border committee to resolve the conflict between herders and farmers and included the Government in efforts to stabilize cattle disputes. This facilitated the signing of a peace agreement in February 2019.¹³

Despite the positive dynamics of the UN — AU cooperation, there are also challenges to this partnership. Firstly, differences exist in the positions these organizations adhere to with regard to conflict situations in African countries. The Libyan crisis is a clear example of this. The members of the UNSC and AUPSC showed stark disagreements during the vote on

UNSC Resolution 1973 (2011).¹⁴ Despite efforts made by the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission to improve the coordination of their work in Libya, the political interests of influential UNSC member-states (France, Great Britain, and the United States) impeded the development of a common strategy. According to S.M. Makinda, F.V. Okumu and D. Mickler, the lack of complementarity when discussing the situation and strategy in Libya can lead to negative consequences and affect the resolution of conflicts on the African continent in the future (Makinda, Okumu & Mickler, 2015).

Secondly, there are issues such as the duplication of efforts by the UN and AU secretariats in peacekeeping operations. For example, the AUPSC was involved in peacekeeping efforts in Burundi, where it planned to deploy 200 military and human rights observers.¹⁵ In February 2016, the number of observers was increased from 35 to 200.¹⁶ At the same time, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in a letter to the UNSC, suggested deploying a police component of 3,000 to protect civilians and monitor human rights.¹⁷ As a result, the AU Commission stressed that the mandate of a UN police staff would duplicate the role of its human rights observers.¹⁸

¹¹ Roadmap for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic // Peace Agreements. 2017. URL: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/2234> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹² Resolution 2448 (2018). Adopted by the Security Council at its 8422nd meeting, on 13 December 2018 // UN Digital Library. December 13, 2018. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1655661> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹³ Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic // Peace Agreements. February, 2019. P. 2. URL: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/2147> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹⁴ Resolution 1973 (2011). Adopted by the Security Council at its 6498th meeting, on 17 March 2011 // UN Digital Library. March 17, 2011. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/699777> (accessed: 10.04.2023). See also: (Forti & Singh, 2019).

¹⁵ Burundi — ONUB — Background // UN Peacekeeping. URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/onub/background.html> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN proposes options for sending police to Burundi // Reuters. April 18, 2016. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-violence-un-idUSKCN0XF2HW> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

¹⁸ Forti D., Singh P., de Carvalho G. After Annual Conference, UN and AU Move from Alignment to Impact // ReliefWeb. May 17, 2019. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/after-annual-conference-un-and-au-move-alignment-impact> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

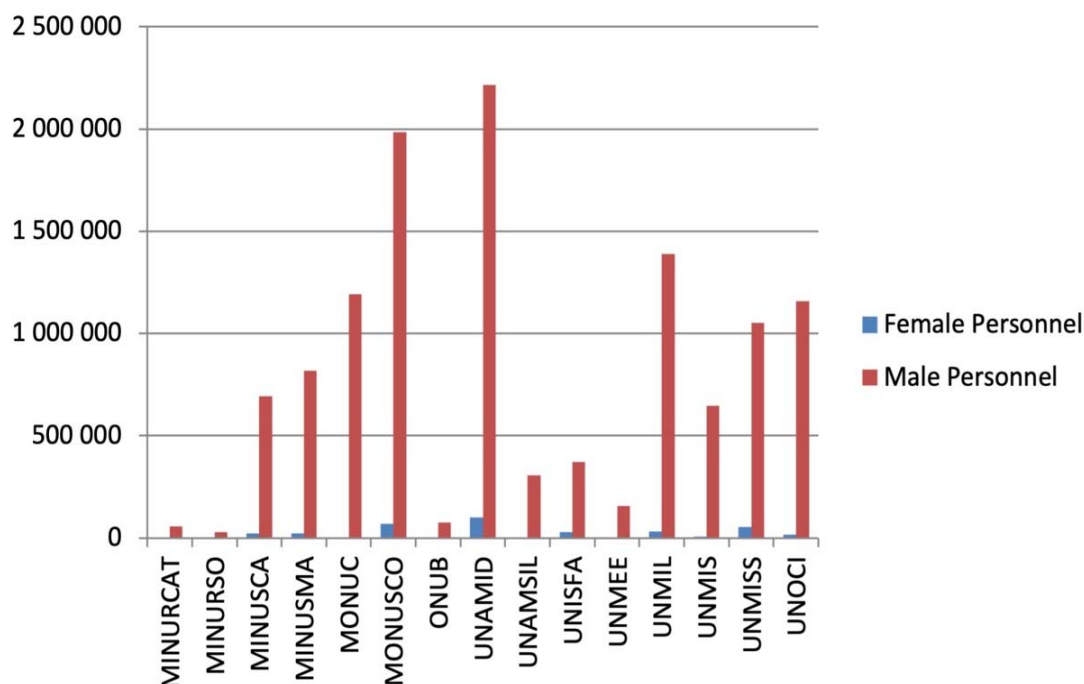


Figure 1. Total Number of Male and Female Personnel in the UN Peacekeeping Operations from 2003 to 2022

Source: Troop and Police Contributors // UN Peacekeeping. URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

This issue requires better strategic alignment between AU and UN objectives and mandates. Furthermore, the UN and the AU have their own strategies for the Sahel (the UN Integrated Strategy in the Sahel and the AU Strategy for the Sahel), as well as political missions (the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel or UNOWAS and the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel or MISAHHEL) and mandated security arrangements (MINUSMA and the G5 Sahel-Joint Force).¹⁹

Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the UN — AU Partnership

Increasing the proportion of women participating in peacekeeping operations is intended to enhance the operational effectiveness of these missions, as well as to fulfill the tasks under the UNSC's Women,

Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which was unanimously approved in Resolution 1325 in 2000.²⁰ Achieving this objective has laid a solid foundation for the UN — AU partnership. Both organizations have contributed to the inclusion of issues identified in the WPS agenda in debates, political processes, resolutions, communiqués and initiatives.

An analysis of the number of women and men participating in 15 peacekeeping missions in Africa from 2003 to 2022 shows that the total number of men participating in each of these operations significantly outnumbers the female contingent (Figure 1). The maximum number of male staff reached 2,214,778 (in the African Union — United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)), while the number of women did not exceed 99,517 (in the same

¹⁹ Forti D., Singh P., de Carvalho G. After Annual Conference, UN and AU Move from Alignment to Impact // ReliefWeb. May 17, 2019. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/after-annual-conference-un-and-au-move-alignment-impact> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁰ Resolution 1325 (2000). Adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000 // UN Security Council. October 31, 2000. URL: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF-CF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES1325%20.pdf> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

operation). In addition, some missions, such as the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), had no female representation at all. Therefore, the UN missions that took place between 2003 and 2022 can be divided into two types: mixed, where both men and women were represented, and all-male, with no women present. Clearly, the UN and the AU have a significant amount of work to do to double the number of female personnel in their missions. This would not only uphold women's right to professional self-determination, but also increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations through the equal participation of women in African peacekeeping.

The UN alone has adopted 10 resolutions²¹ on this subject (apart from organizing annual debates and regular briefings by senior officials). These resolutions not only expanded and complemented resolution 1325, but also formed the WPS agenda. They underlined the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention and resolution, including by addressing the impact of sexual violence. To integrate these norms into the work of the departments of peacekeeping operations, a separate gender responsive UN peacekeeping operations policy has been developed.²²

However, existing research points to partial implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 (Karim & Beardsley, 2015; Kreft, 2017). References to gender issues in peace agreements have moderately increased (Bell & O'Rourke, 2010), but the overall increase in women's

participation in peacekeeping operations has been relatively low. This is primarily due to the recruitment of women in "civilian positions" (gender advisors, experts) (Olsson & Gizelis, 2015), with statistics confirming that female military personnel are predominantly deployed to low-risk conflicts. According to the UN, the current deployment rate of women in missions is 18%, with only 8% of female military staff.²³

The AU has actively begun to incorporate the WPS agenda into its peace and security structures and processes, based on UNSC resolution 1325. The AU declared 2010—2020 as the "African Women's Decade," and dedicated two of its annual themes to gender issues: 2015 was the "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063," and 2016 was "The Year of Human Rights with a Special Focus on Women's Rights" (Hendricks, 2017, p. 82).

Gender issues are reflected in the appointment of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security in 2014, in the AU's official statements, and in its policies and practices. In 2015, UNSC's resolution 2242 requested the Secretary General to review (in collaboration with member states) strategies aimed at doubling the number of women in the military and police forces of UN peacekeeping operations by 2020.²⁴ The UNSC presidential statement 2016/9 noted that both organizations could strengthen their collective efforts to recognize and enhance the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.²⁵

²³ Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Mission, Personnel Type, and Gender Experts on Mission, Formed Police Units, Individual Police, Staff Officer, and Troops As of: 31/12/2021 // UN Peacekeeping. December 2021. URL: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/07_gender_statistics_45_dec_2021.pdf (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁴ Resolution 2242 (2015). Adopted by the Security Council at its 7533rd meeting, on 13 October 2015 // UN Digital Library. 2015. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/807245?ln=ru> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁵ Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2016/9) // UN Security Council. June 15, 2016. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/>

²¹ UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2272 (2016), 2467 (2019).

²² Gender Responsive United Nations Peacekeeping Operations // United Nations Peacekeeping. February 1, 2018. URL: https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/gender-responsive-un-peacekeeping-operations-policy-en_0.pdf (accessed: 10.04.2023).

The AU's annual briefings also committed to this issue and were timed to coincide with the UNSC's annual debates on the same topic. The AU encourages its member states to develop, adopt and implement national action plans for implementing the UNSC resolution 1325.²⁶ There are 29 African countries and 2 regional organizations, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), that have adopted National or Regional Action Plans on WPS.²⁷

To fulfill the commitment to involve women in peacekeeping in Africa, the UN and the AU jointly established the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa)²⁸ as a subsidiary mechanism of the Panel of the Wise, one of the pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).²⁹ It is of strategic importance for policy development and advocacy in bridging the gap between commitments to women's participation and actual implementation.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda in MINUSMA

Mali began actively supporting the WPS agenda well before the multidimensional crisis

N16/175/47/PDF/N1617547.pdf?OpenElement (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁶ 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs): WILPF Monitoring and Analysis of National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security // Peace Women. URL: <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁷ National Action Plans by region // Peace Women. URL: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁸ Strengthening African Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention, Mediation Processes and Peace Stabilisation Efforts: Operationalisation of "FemWise-Africa" // African Union. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-concept-note-femwise-sept-15-short-version-clean-4-flyer.pdf> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

²⁹ FemWise-Africa // Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks. URL: <https://www.globalwomenmediators.org/femwise-africa/> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

of 2012, which combined political problems, economic instability, and security concerns. The country ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, and the Maputo Protocol in 2003. The Malian Constitution of 1992 guarantees equal rights to all citizens regardless of gender.³⁰ Furthermore, Mali published its first National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 in 2012.³¹

The Malian crisis catalyzed the intervention of global and regional actors in international relations, with the aim of resolving the situation and establishing their spheres of influence. In 2013, two peacekeeping operations were launched in Mali: France initiated the Serval military operation, and the UN deployed the MINUSMA peacekeeping operation. Although the AU aimed to position itself as a security partner through the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), both the French operation Serval and MINUSMA bypassed the AU, creating a serious discord between the two organizations (Weiss & Welz, 2014).

In 2015, Mali passed a law establishing a 30% gender quota for appointments to political offices and decision-making institutions.³²

In the same year, the Bamako Agreement³³ was signed, which included 11 references to women, one of which stated that there would be no amnesty for violence perpetrated against women and 3 of which addressed women's roles in the economic and social development of the

³⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Mali 1992 // World Intellectual Property Organization. URL: <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/ru/text/315406> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³¹ National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 of the Security Council of the United Nations on Women, Peace and Security 2012—2014 // Peace Women. March, 2012. URL: <http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mali-NAP-2012-2014-English-1.pdf> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³² Ibid.

³³ The peace agreement between the government of Mali and Tuareg separatists signed in 2015 in Bamako.

northern regions.³⁴ According to a research report published by the Danish Institute for International Studies in 2016, entitled “Female peacekeepers are vital for the UN mission in Mali,” only 1.8 per cent of the 11,000 troops in the MINUSMA force were women.³⁵ This underscored a very low level of engagement of women in peacekeeping, which can be attributed to several reasons.

Firstly, one of the most pressing issues in African and international peacekeeping is conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (Bokeriya, 2021). UNSC resolution 1888 (2009) deployed a specialized contingent to 5 peacekeeping missions (MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMID and UNMISS), including a Senior Advisor on women’s protection. Their activities involved monitoring and verifying CRSV cases, including CRSV situations in mission plans and strategies, and coordinating with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on CRSV.³⁶

An analysis of the number of women and men participating in MINUSMA from 2014 to 2022 shows that the total number of men participating significantly outnumbers the female contingent (Figure 2). The maximum number of male staff reached 14,016 in 2018, while the number of women did not exceed 882 in 2022. Notably, a significant increase in the female contingent in MINUSMA began to be observed after 2016 (Figure 3), when a senior

gender advisor was recruited in MINUSMA to coordinate gender mainstreaming and support the implementation of resolution 1325.³⁷ An additional function of the Gender Adviser was to raise awareness of the gender issues among MINUSMA troops.

In addition, since 2016, MINUSMA has organized specialized gender training for the military contingents, with a special emphasis on CRSV. Nevertheless, the progress in the implementation of women in MINUSMA is not so high.³⁸

Secondly, African countries which provide the majority of MINUSMA’s peacekeepers (Figure 4), such as Togo, Benin, Guinea and Chad, have not contributed female soldiers. Reasons for this include poor living conditions, the harsh climate in the northern part of Mali, and an asymmetrical threat to the environment where more than 100 mostly African peacekeepers have been killed.³⁹

Thirdly, gender is a culturally significant issue in the northern Malian communities. Women are not allowed to speak publicly in the presence of men, limiting their potential for engagement in peacekeeping and mediation (Gorman & Chauzal, 2019).

MINUSMA has its own Gender Unit, tasked with integrating a gender perspective into policies, strategies and security sector reform. It also promotes women’s political participation, human rights and the fight against gender-based violence.⁴⁰

³⁴ Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers process // United Nations. 2015. URL: https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/EN-ML_150620_Accord-pour-la-paix-et-la-reconciliation-au-Mali_Issu-du-Processus-d'Alger.pdf (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³⁵ Cold-Ravnkilde S. M., Albrecht P., Haugegaard R. Women in MINUSMA: Female peacekeepers are vital for the UN mission in Mali // DIIS Policy Brief. Copenhagen : Danish Institute for International Studies, 2016. P. 1—4. URL: https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/712641/Gender_in_Minusma_WEB.pdf (accessed: 23.04.2023).

³⁶ Resolution 1888 (2009). Adopted by the Security Council at its 6195th meeting, on 30 September 2009 // UN Digital Library. 2009. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/666430?ln=ru> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³⁷ MINUSMA’s implementation plans on gender parity and equality // UN Women. URL: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/MINUSMA-implementation-plan-on-gender-parity-and-equality-en.pdf> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Cold-Ravnkilde S. M., Albrecht P., Haugegaard R. Women in MINUSMA: Female peacekeepers are vital for the UN mission in Mali // DIIS Policy Brief. Copenhagen : Danish Institute for International Studies, 2016. P. 1—4. URL: https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/712641/Gender_in_Minusma_WEB.pdf (accessed: 23.04.2023).

⁴⁰ Mandate of the Gender unit // MINUSMA. URL: <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/mandate-gender-unit> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

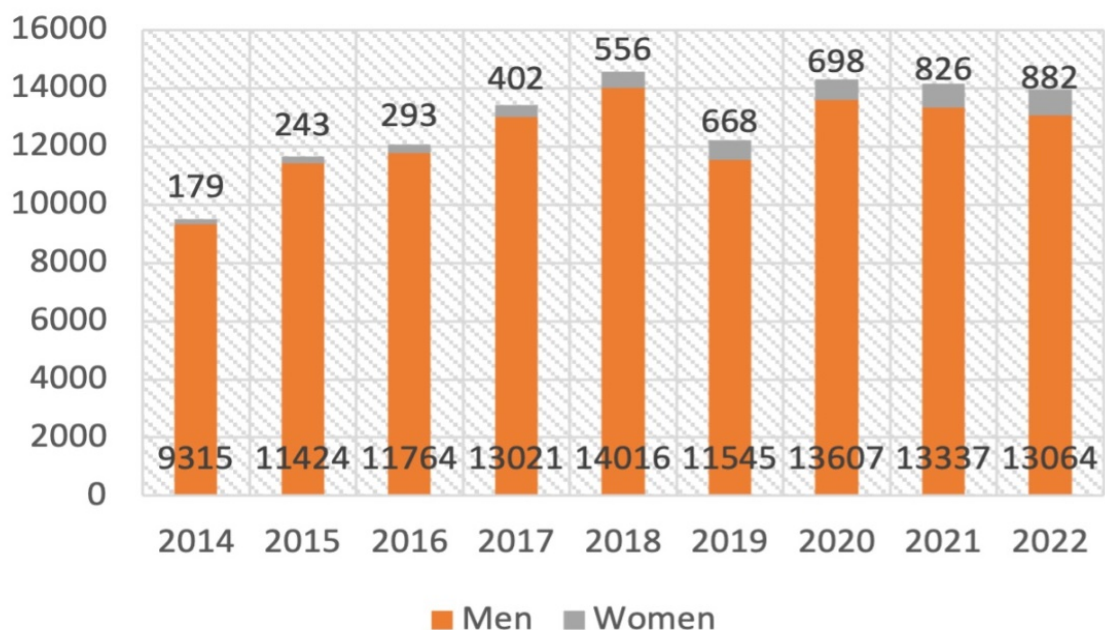


Figure 2. Total Number of Male and Female MINUSMA Personnel from 2014 to 2022
 Source: Troop and Police Contributors // UN Peacekeeping.
 URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

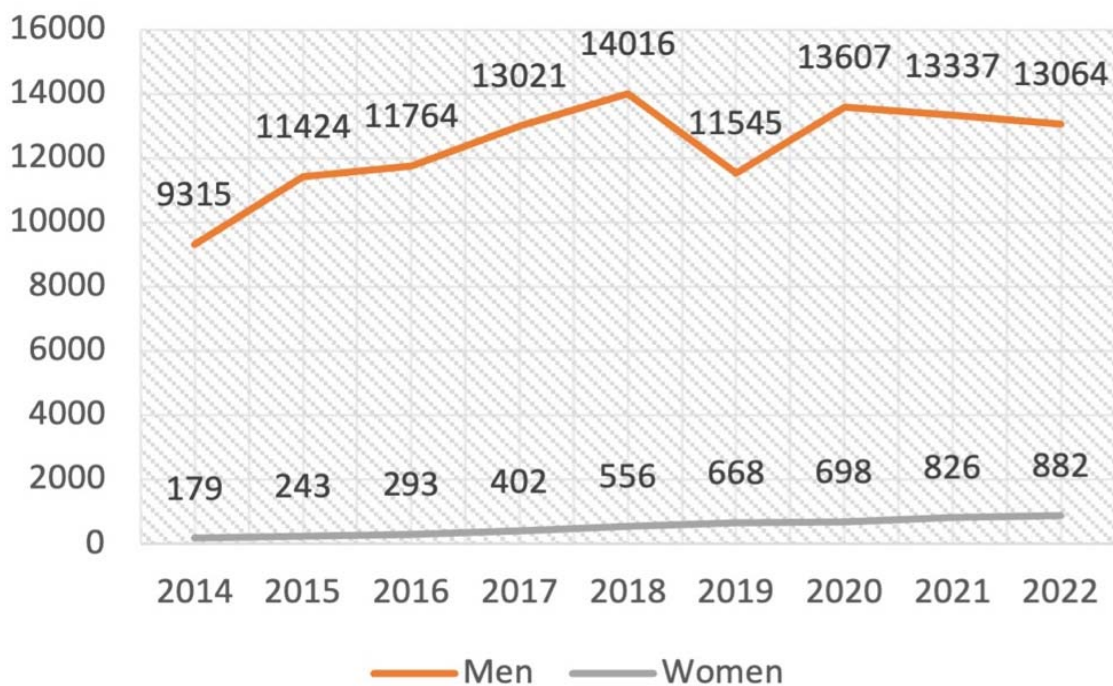


Figure 3. Dynamics of Change in the Number of Male and Female MINUSMA Personnel from 2014 to 2022
 Source: Troop and Police Contributors // UN Peacekeeping.
 URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

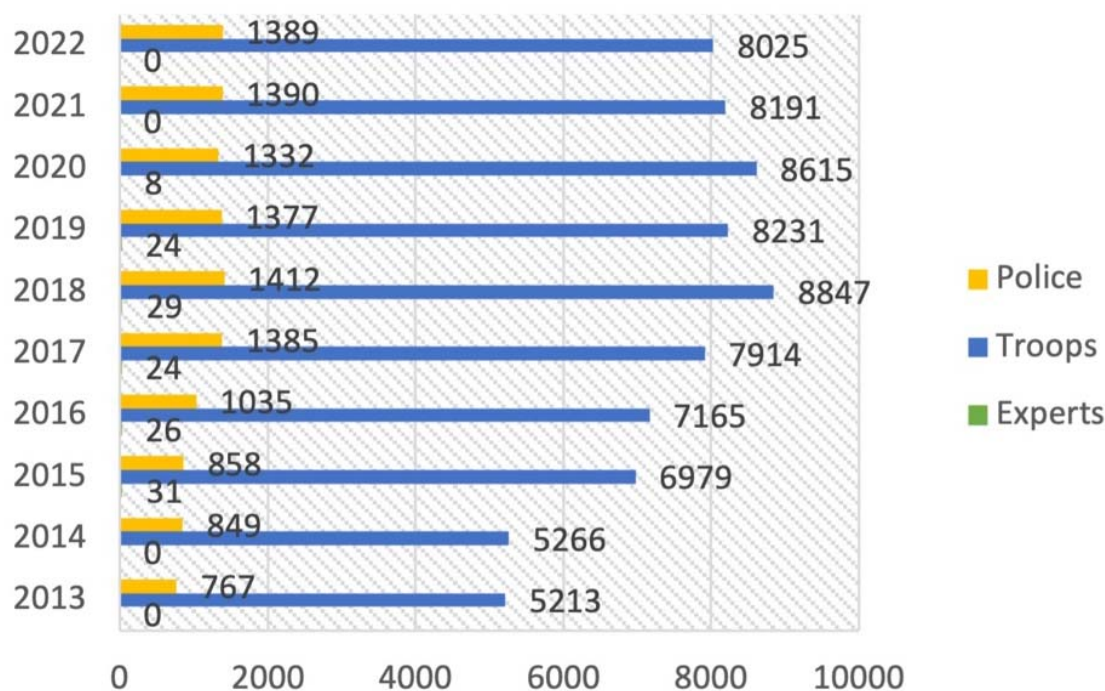


Figure 4. African Contingent by Composition in MINUSMA from 2013 to 2022

Source: Troop and Police Contributors // UN Peacekeeping.

URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

The mission's gender task force includes focal points from all major MINUSMA units, as well as a working group that monitors and reports on gender issues. In addition, MINUSMA is working with UN Women and the Government of Mali to implement the National Action Plan on UNSC resolution 1325.⁴¹

Through the Gender Unit, MINUSMA, in cooperation with UN agencies, has increased female participation in the peace process by establishing a separate women's committee. This helped women's groups to define their key priorities for the future implementation of the Algiers Agreement.⁴² The Gender Unit also

supported a platform of women's groups from Mali in drafting a list of recommendations for presidential candidates prior to the elections in 2018 (Van der Lijn et al., 2019).

Discussion

Despite the increase in the number of women peacekeepers in recent years, the goals set by the United Nations have not been fully achieved. Some success in their implementation is observed at the level of women experts from 2013 to 2020 (see Figure 4). In the academic environment, several main reasons for this trend are identified.

⁴¹ Mandate of the Gender unit // MINUSMA. URL: <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/mandate-gender-unit> (accessed: 10.04.2023).

⁴² The peace and reconciliation agreement in Mali was signed in 2015 as a part of the Algerian process between the Malian government and the coalition of pro-government armed groups from northern Mali called the Platform and the Coordination of Movements of Azawad to stabilize the conflict situation in the region. The UN,

ECOWAS, the AU, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as France, Algeria, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger were mediators. See: Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers process // United Nations. 2015. URL: https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/EN-ML_150620_Accord-pour-la-paix-et-la-reconciliation-au-Mali_Issu-du-Processus-d'Alger.pdf (accessed: 10.04.2023).

Although the UN Security Council aims to increase the number of female peacekeepers, the decision to include them in the mission ultimately rests with the individual troop-contributing countries. Their leaders make the direct decision on the composition of the contingent (Tidblad-Lundholm, 2020). Interestingly, women peacekeepers are less likely to be deployed to high-risk missions, such as those with a high intensity of conflict and/or sexual violence (Karim & Beardsley, 2013). Western researchers agree that gender-specific protection norms deter women from being assigned to missions where combat-related deaths and peacekeeper casualties are more prevalent. This decision is also influenced by the level of sexual violence during the conflict — the higher it is the less likely women are to be assigned to missions (Berg & Bjarnegård, 2016). Furthermore, some researchers have drawn attention to the inconsistent application of resolution 1325 to the mandates of peacekeeping operations. A hypothesis suggests that the higher the level of gendered violence (primarily sexual violence) in conflict, the more gender dimensions are included in the mandate of a UN operation (Kreft, 2017).

Conclusion

This article argues that despite the positive dynamics of interaction between the UN and the AU, there are problematic areas within the partnership of the two organizations. Firstly, there are differences in positions on the resolution of crises in African states (e.g. Libya). Secondly, the work of the two Councils duplicates the efforts of the UN and the AU secretariats in implementing peacekeeping

operations. All these factors reduce the effectiveness of ongoing UN and AU peacekeeping missions. However, at the same time, they serve as an incentive to find joint ways to overcome these problems and improve collective actions to stabilize conflicts in Africa.

Using the case of Mali, the study shows that the UN and the AU can strengthen their roles as integrators of a gender perspective in mainstreaming women in peacekeeping. The situation in MINUSMA illustrates that prevailing stereotypes regarding the competencies of men and women as protectors prevent contributing countries from deploying women personnel into such risky conflict zones.

In this context, the advancement of the WPS agenda and the implementation of the UN resolution 1325 initiatives could be greatly facilitated by guidance and advice provided to member states by the UN, the AU and peacekeeping non-governmental organizations. This approach is consistent with achieving gender parity at the national level, and includes recommendations to synchronize certain provisions on this issue in legal instruments, adopted by these states and international organizations.

Although both the UN and the AU have advocated for more women to be appointed at higher levels in peacekeeping missions, the responsibility for this lies with their member states. Thus, the UN and the AU act as agents of a gender approach in shaping peacekeeping operations. Given that member states have not yet achieved national gender parity, the effectiveness of the UN and the AU initiatives in this regard may be limited.

Received / Поступила в редакцию: 29.03.2023

Revised / Доработана после рецензирования: 10.04.2023

Accepted / Принята к публикации: 17.04.2023

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