

A SHARED COMMITMENT: AFRICAN-NORDIC PEACE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

A report from the Norwegian
Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)
and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI)

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INDEX WORDS:

Foreign relations
Foreign policy
International cooperation
Development aid
Peace
Security
Africa
Denmark
Finland
Iceland
Norway
Sweden

De Coning, Cedric; Muvumba Sellström, Angela (eds) (2023). *A Shared Commitment: African-Nordic Peace and Security Cooperation*. Oslo and Uppsala: Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt (NUPI) and Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (NAI).

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ISBN 978-91-7106-899-6

Front cover image: Monrovia, Liberia, June 2022. People celebrating a mass Action for peace, organised by the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Photo: Ahmed Jallanzo, EPA.

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Preface

The bond between African and Nordic countries, encompassing Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden, is a unique and enduring testament to collaborative efforts that have evolved over time. This special relationship finds its roots in the unwavering support provided by the Nordic countries during the liberation struggles of a number of African countries, especially in Southern Africa. Subsequently, this relationship solidified through decades of steadfast collaboration across humanitarian, developmental, peace, and security spheres.

This report delves into the intricate tapestry of Africa-Nordic cooperation, focusing specifically on the area of peace and security between 2012 and 2021, the most recent year for which data is available. This period witnessed further growth in the agency of the African Union, which has developed significant peace and security capacity, partly with Nordic countries' support. Concurrently, several regional economic communities and regional mechanisms enhanced their peace and security capacities, manifesting notable advancement in areas such as mediation; women, peace and security, and peace operations, for instance, through the development process of the African Standby Force. The Nordic countries take pride in their enduring partnerships with these institutions across all these domains. Nevertheless, despite these gains, certain peace and security risks persist, and new risks have emerged. These include transnational threats with a global origin and impact, such as the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security, as well as extremist violence and terrorism.

This report was written as a collaborative effort, involving the dedicated efforts of more than a dozen African- and Nordic-based researchers. The research has been led by our two institutions, namely the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We trust that this report will serve as a catalyst for stimulating discussions on African-Nordic cooperation across various platforms, where African and Nordic researchers, diplomats, officials and stakeholders gather, including the annual meeting of African and Nordic foreign ministers. As the report maps contemporary and historic areas of cooperation over the last decade, we hope it will enable stakeholders to identify gaps and untapped opportunities for further cooperation.



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Executive summary

The African Union's peace and security architecture has significantly developed over the past two decades, but Africa still faces persistent and resurgent armed conflict and war. Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, have established a robust partnership with Africa, supporting the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) through initiatives with African governments, the AU, regional economic communities and mechanisms, civil society, and research institutions. Nordic countries generally provide multilateral support through the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), also in cooperation with the AU. They have prioritised particular countries and institutions for bilateral support and cooperation.

This report presents key highlights in African-Nordic cooperation in peace and security over the last decade (2012-2021). It is published by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and the Nordic Africa Institute and features contributions by African and mostly Nordic or Nordic-based researchers and practitioners from universities, policy research institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The authors present case studies of each of the five Nordic countries and reflect on five cross-cutting areas that have characterised African-Nordic cooperation in peace and security.

The Nordic case studies are organised according to a common framework that focuses on five key priority areas: mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes; women, peace and security; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; peace operations and stabilisation; and climate, peace and security. The editorial team identified these areas to provide a standard approach for all the Nordic case studies. Cross-cutting thematic perspectives address African peace support capacity; women, peace and security; youth, peace and security; peacekeeping and violent extremism; and the AU Partnership and the AU Peace Fund.

The report uses data from the OECD/Development Assistance Committees (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database to map the support of Nordic countries in Africa for peace and security. The data brought together for this report specifies the top 10 thematic priority areas and recipient countries in Africa over ten years, for each Nordic country. The data covers committed funds in USD and constant prices from 2012 to 2021.

All the Nordic countries work across the conflict spectrum and use a wide array of tools for partnering with African actors, including knowledge generation, training, capacity building, deployment of personnel and technical experts. Between 2012 and 2021, Nordic countries pledged USD 4.96 billion in development cooperation funding to Africa's peace and security.

The report highlights strategies adopted by the Nordic countries. Denmark has invested heavily in democracy and regional stabilisation, with Kenya and Mali as priority countries, and it established its own Peace and Stabilisation Fund to facilitate a flexible, whole-of-government approach at the intersection between security and development. Finland has actively worked with the AU, EU, UN, and its African and Nordic partners to support mediation and reinforce inclusivity and sustainability. Finland's Africa Strategy emphasises equal partnership over aid dependency, and its AU Mediation Support project is considered a flagship effort. Iceland strongly focuses on combating climate change and strengthening climate resilience in its bilateral cooperation. It also places top priority to gender equality and the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. It has developed a unique model, the Barbershop Toolbox, for mobilising men in the

struggle for gender equality. With over 30 years of peace diplomacy experience, Norway is enhancing the African-Nordic partnership's capacity to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in Africa and has supported the Training for Peace (TfP) programme for over twenty years. Sweden has shifted its international development cooperation to Africa's fragile regions while focusing on APSA, capacity building, and the WPS agenda. This has boosted civilian peacebuilding, mediation, conflict prevention, human rights, and democracy.

Nordic states have diverse approaches that seem traceable to their size, national capacity, and experience. However, their support to African actors covers the spectrum of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The cooperation includes technical support, training, research cooperation, joint programming, and civilian and military secondments to African institutions. Above all, there is a significant amount of comparative, accumulated action that is complementary.

While all the Nordic countries have been actively engaged in peace diplomacy, support for peace operations and countering violent extremism in Africa, a top area of support has been democratic practice. The key regions for African-Nordic cooperation are the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Nordic countries have also supported local ownership, promoted African agency, and collaborated with African and Nordic non-governmental and civil society actors. To further strengthen the relationship, in pursuit of peace and security in Africa, three recommendations are offered:

1. **Strategic partnerships:** The African-Nordic relationship has historically been framed in terms of development and humanitarian assistance provided by Nordic countries to their African partners. However, the motivations for support in peace and security are geopolitical, contributing to maintaining international peace and security and developing strategic partnerships in the context of a changing global order. As African capacity and agency grow, the relationship must be transformed from a donor-recipient relationship into a strategic partnership guided by mutually beneficial interests.
2. **The African-Nordic niche:** The priorities for most countries have been peace diplomacy, democracy, human rights, and WPS. The theme of climate, peace, and security is also vital for African-Nordic cooperation. Both sides have multiple strategic partnership frameworks, but for the African-Nordic partnership to be sustained, its comparative advantage needs to be clear to all partners.
3. **The AU Peace Fund:** African institutions like the African Union have developed significant capabilities in peace and security over the past two decades. However, Africa's need for more financial resources is a primary challenge. The AU is revitalising the AU Peace Fund, focusing on flexibility and strengthening African agency through investment in African institutions rather than direct interventions.

Introduction

By Cedric de Coning and Angela Muvumba Sellström

In the two decades since the establishment of the African Union's peace and security architecture, Africa's capacity in this area has developed significantly – not only within the African Union (AU), but also within the regional economic communities, regional mechanisms, member states and civil society. Over the same period, however, Africa has witnessed evolving, persistent and, in some contexts, resurgent armed conflict and war. Numerous challenges exist, ranging from intra-state conflicts to transnational threats that also have a global origin and impact – such as extremist violence and terrorism – and that hinder the region's stability and development.

In this context, the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – have established a robust partnership with Africa that dates back to the mid-twentieth century. Over the last two decades, this collaboration has included supporting the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), through initiatives with African governments, the AU, other African institutions at the continental, regional and subregional level, as well as with civil society and research institutions, to further strengthen Africa's conflict prevention, mediation, diplomacy, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding capacity and actions.

About the report

This report presents key highlights in African-Nordic cooperation in the area of peace and security for a period of ten years (2012–2021). It is a collaboration of 15 African and Nordic-based researchers and practitioners from universities, policy research institutions and non-governmental organisations. Authors based in the Nordic region have carried out research on each Nordic country's policies, peace diplomacy, security sector relations and development cooperation towards Africa in the area of peace and security. Contributing authors – based mainly, but not exclusively, in Africa – reflect on a number of thematic areas that have characterised African-Nordic cooperation in the area of peace and security, including women, peace and security; youth, peace and security; African peace support capacity; African Union partnerships and the peace fund; and peacekeeping and violent extremism. The report also provides an overview of Nordic support in the form of a round-up of information about Nordic commitments to peace and security in Africa for the period 2012–2021, drawing on data maintained by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The research has been coordinated by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The report can be used as a catalyst for discussing African-Nordic cooperation in various fora where African and Nordic diplomats, officials, researchers or other stakeholders gather, including the annual meeting of African and Nordic foreign ministers. It maps contemporary and historic areas of cooperation, which will enable stakeholders to identify gaps and further opportunities for cooperation. The report is oriented toward the African-Nordic policy community. While evidence-based, it has been edited with a view to providing a broad, accessible review for busy policymakers and other practitioners. Finally, the report is not an evaluation or assessment

of aid effectiveness: it is a presentation of information and patterns on African-Nordic cooperation in the area of peace and security, and it can serve as a basis for future research and reflection.

African-Nordic cooperation in the area of peace and security

The authors of this study offer brief overviews of the various bilateral and multilateral approaches taken by the Nordic countries over the past decade (2012–2022). Nordic countries generally provide robust multilateral support through the United Nations (UN), and some are also part of European Union (EU) efforts to cooperate with the AU. In addition to this multilateral support, they have bilaterally prioritised particular countries and institutions – including the AU – for support and cooperation. This report maps the Nordic case studies in relation to five key priority areas:

1. Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes
2. Women, peace and security
3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law
4. Peace operations and stabilisation
5. Climate, peace and security

These areas were determined and defined by the editorial team in order to provide a standard foundation for all Nordic case studies. Our collective expertise in the field of peace and security, which has been developed over several decades, informs the choice of these categories. They were not adopted from a single government policy or guidelines for African-Nordic partnership. Nevertheless, the priority areas are still rooted in our reading of the AU's Agenda 2063 and the UN's conflict management activities, as well as the general range of priorities and initiatives that fall within the area of peace and security. Nordic case studies are complemented by the following cross-cutting thematic perspectives:

- African peace support capacity
- Women, peace, and security
- Youth, peace, and security
- Peacekeeping and countering violent extremism
- The African Union (AU) Partnership and the Peace Fund.

As noted above, the report also utilises data from the OECD/Development Assistance Committees (DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database. The OECD maintains various code lists which are used by donors to report on, and classify, their aid flows to the DAC databases. The graphs and tables on the Nordic state cases, presented in this report cover Official Development Assistance (ODA) Flows for categories related to peace and security exclusively, using the OECD/DAC codes 151 (Government and Civil Society, General) and 152 (Conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security) (See Figure 1: Categories of Cooperation). With regard to code 151, we selected the most relevant codes to peace and security, and excluded codes that, in our estimation, would address mainly non-conflict-related gender, governance and development needs. This means that the report may not capture all peace and security cooperation, and that there may be gaps and limitations in our data. However, as a starting point, the data provides a viable map for understanding how and in which areas Nordic countries supported peace and security in Africa. The dataset is structured to set out the top 10 thematic priority areas and the top 10 recipient countries in Africa, over a period of 10 years, for the Nordic donor countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden). The data covers committed funds in USD Millions and constant prices, from 2012 to 2021.

This report conveys how each Nordic country has implemented its own foreign, security and development policies, while aligning these with African, Nordic and broader international policy frameworks. To the extent that it is possible to identify highlights, one can say that **Denmark** has

invested heavily in democracy and regional stabilisation, particularly in the Horn of Africa and, more recently, the Sahel. **Finland** has been working actively with the AU, EU, UN and its African and Nordic partners to reinforce inclusivity and sustainability. Gender equality is a key pillar of the foreign policy of **Iceland**, which has worked extensively on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, supporting various international organisations and giving bilateral assistance for WPS national action plans. **Norway** has over 30 years' experience of peace diplomacy, with African and Norwegian human, technical and financial support in peace processes in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Mali. **Sweden** has adopted a comprehensive approach to cooperation with Africa in the area of peace and security, focusing on the APSA, capacity building and the WPS agenda.

While there are observable differences in the countries' approaches, it must be emphasised that these are not specialisations: all the Nordic countries work across the conflict spectrum and utilise a wide array of tools for partnering with African actors, including knowledge generation,

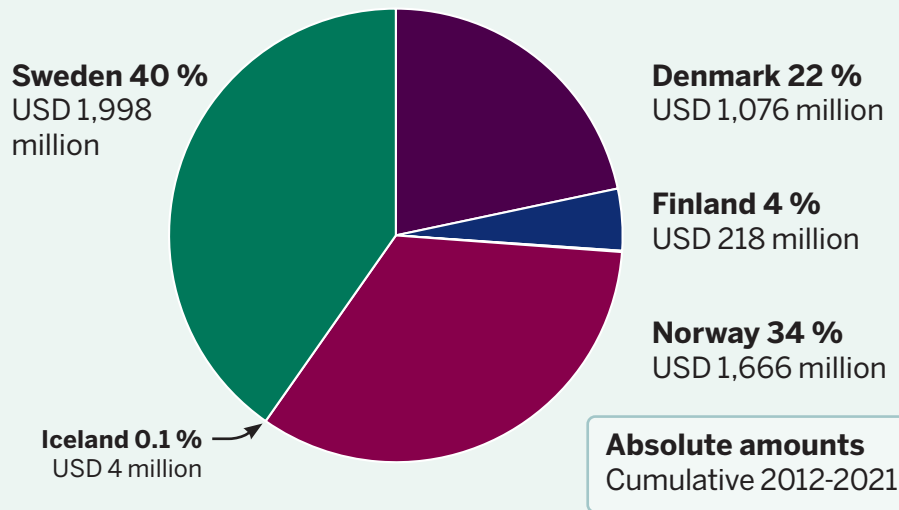
Twelve key areas of peace and security

Between 2012 and 2021, the Nordic countries reported ODA commitments of USD 4.96 billion (constant prices) to peace and security cooperation in Africa in these twelve key areas:

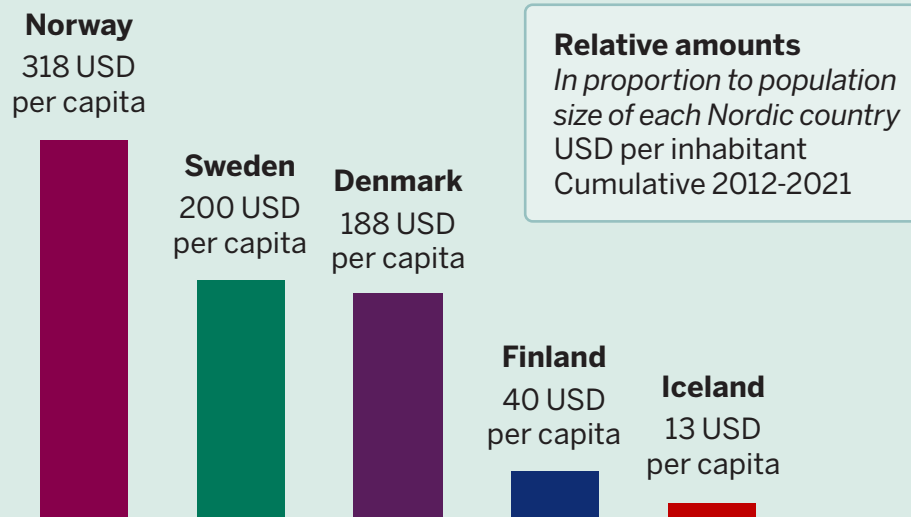
	Percentage	Million USD
1. Democratic participation and civil society	32 %	1,607
2. Civilian peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution.....	26 %	1,303
3. Human rights.....	20 %	1,002
4. Women's rights organisations and institutions.....	10 %	479
5. Elections	2.7 %	134
6. Participation in international peace-keeping operations	2.3 %	114
7. Media and free flow of information	2.3 %	112
8. Removal of land mines and explosive remnants of war	1.7 %	82
9. Security system management and reform	1.6 %	78
10. Legislatures and political parties	0.6 %	28
11. Child soldiers (Prevention and demobilisation)	0.3 %	16
12. Reintegration and small arms light weapons control.....	0.2 %	8
TOTAL SUM	100 %	4,963

Key areas for the Nordic countries' peace and security cooperation in Africa.
Cumulative ODA, constant prices. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

The Nordic countries' funding of peace and security cooperation in Africa 2012-2021: 40 per cent comes from Sweden



Norway top funder in relative terms



Official development assistance (ODA) from the Nordic countries for peace and security cooperation in Africa. Cumulated 2012-2021. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

training, capacity building, deployment of personnel and technical experts, and engagement with local, national and international civil society groups.

As mentioned above, the research draws on information contained within the Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database of the OECD/DAC. This shows that between 2012 and 2021, the Nordic countries pledged a total of USD 4.96 billion in development cooperation funding to Africa's peace and security.

Themes and partnership

Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes

Finland and Norway have emphasised mediation as part of their foreign policy, positively supporting actors involved in conflict resolution at all levels, including directly engaging in international mediation efforts. Denmark has focused on conflict prevention, working with international organisations like the AU, EU and UN. Rather than mediating in disputes directly, Iceland has promoted the participation of local women in peace processes: it has established its own national network and has also participated in the Nordic Women Mediators' network (with all Nordic countries also involved as well as establishing their own country-level networks). Finland has established a Centre for Mediation under the Foreign Ministry's Political Department, and Finnish-based organisations have been active in peace processes in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Libya and elsewhere. Norway's mediation support has focused primarily on Sudan and South Sudan, where it has a strong historical commitment to peace and security: between 2019 and 2022, Norway contributed USD 22 million to the UN Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund in South Sudan, with a significant portion going to the UN's reconciliation efforts. Sweden's international development cooperation in Africa prioritises peaceful and inclusive societies; its interventions were worth nearly USD 90 million in 2021. Civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution is now the dominant priority area, with South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Africa's peace and security institutions (such as the AU) significant partners.

Nordic strategies have been particularly invested in strengthening APSA. The AU Peace Fund, revitalised in 2016, is furthermore an important tool for consolidating the AU's ownership and agency – and potentially enhancing Nordic engagement. Thus far, USD 322 million have been collected from AU member state-assessed, direct voluntary contributions and interest generated through low-risk investments. Nordic support for APSA – through capacity building for AU-led peace support operations, direct cooperation with the AU Commission's Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), financing of the AU Mediation Project and the AU Special Envoy on WPS – is viewed as flexible, responsive and mutually beneficial, offering a unique model that other partners now replicate. While Nordic countries have yet to directly support the AU Peace Fund, the wide array of support and interaction through other parts of APSA is an important part of African-Nordic cooperation.

Women, peace and security

Nordic engagement with Africa supports inclusive peace processes and the WPS agenda. Nordic nations have welcomed and supported African initiatives like FemWise-Africa, a precursor of women's mediation networks globally. National action plans, Nordic-based international non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations that work with African organisations in conflict-affected countries all contribute in their own ways to promoting WPS. Nordic states have also been innovative: for example, Iceland has developed a Barbershop Toolbox to mobilise men in pursuit of gender equality, while Norway has supported the AU Special Envoy on WPS with earmarked funding. The OECD/DAC data mapped for this report, shows that between 2012 and 2021, the Nordic countries committed USD 479 million to WPS-focused activities – 10 per cent of the total Nordic development cooperation funds for peace and security in Africa.

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Denmark has as its top priorities human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and it provides support for civil society, the judiciary and local public goods. From 2012 to 2021, it spent USD 367 million on promoting human rights, with over 90 per cent of that funding bilateral. Finland also believes that sustainable peace and security is rooted in this field: it has spent USD 52 million on democratic engagements and support for civil society. Iceland's development cooperation focuses on the priority countries of Malawi, Uganda and Sierra Leone: it has provided support for UNICEF offices in Ethiopia and for a pilot project in Sierra Leone. Iceland also actively supports

elections and election observation missions in its country programming, and it contributes to ensuring the equal representation of both men and women in the recruitment of observers. Norway has supported the implementation and operationalisation of a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework for the G5 Sahel Joint Force through the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR). From 2018 to 2021, it contributed approximately USD 2.9 million to the G5 Sahel Framework and a total of USD 4.6 million to the country offices in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and the regional OHCHR office in Dakar (Senegal). Sweden's peace and security approach focuses on regional and local levels of democratic practice, normative frameworks and supporting marginalised groups. The Raoul Wallenberg Institute assists in accessing justice and implementing regional human rights commitments.

Peace operations and stabilisation

Denmark is actively engaged in four of the EU's five civilian missions on the African continent and has deployed personnel to the UN peacekeeping operations in the DRC, Mali and South Sudan. The key priorities for its peace efforts in Africa have been the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions, often funded through the Peace and Stabilisation Fund. As one of the world's largest commercial shipping nations, Denmark has also prioritised anti-piracy efforts in East and West Africa. Finnish military personnel are deployed to EU training missions in Mali, Mozambique and Somalia, as well as to the UN mission in Mali. Similarly, Iceland – a country with a small population, but a high level of education – has provided support to peace operations through the secondment of individuals. Norway's largest contribution to UN peace operations over the last decade was to the UN missions in Mali and South Sudan. It also supports training and capacity building through the Training for Peace project, as well as by supporting African training centres like the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Through its Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP), Norway also seconded personnel to AU and UN peace operations. Furthermore, the country has made significant contributions to the anti-piracy operations in East and West Africa. Sweden has also deployed military, police and civilian personnel to UN and EU missions in Africa, including its largest deployment of the last decade to the UN mission in Mali. It deploys civilian and police experts through the Folke Bernadotte Academy and provides support to African peacekeeping training centres.

Climate, peace and security

To help in the achievement of global goals, the Nordic countries are actively cooperating in promoting climate-related peace and security. Denmark has been collaborating with Ethiopia since 2016 to achieve universal access to electricity by 2025, and has pledged USD 21 million to address post-conflict humanitarian challenges, such as drought. Through development cooperation and the Helsinki Policy Forum, Finland aids people and natural systems in preparing for and adapting to climate change. The government of Iceland supports such efforts as the Land Restoration Training Programme (GRÓ-LRT) and tree planting in Sierra Leone. During its period as an elected member of the UN Security Council, from 2021–2022 Norway worked with Kenya and other African countries to achieve cross-regional cooperation and to mobilise support for the climate, peace and security agenda. Sweden's development cooperation in Africa includes investments in climate adaptation and resilience measures, with a focus on the relationship between climate change and conflict, as well as 'irregular and involuntary' migration. For example, the country has partnered with the international non-governmental organisation Saferworld in Uganda to address the causes of conflict, and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Djibouti, Yemen, Somalia and Tanzania to assist vulnerable Ethiopian migrants. Sweden is also investing in climate adaptation and resilience methods, working with regional players to reduce catastrophe risk.

Conclusion


This study highlights African-Nordic cooperation in the area of peace and security. It shows that although cooperation is diverse and multifaceted, it is underpinned by shared values, built on a

history of consistent solidarity, and characterised by flexibility and responsiveness. It covers a wide spectrum, including technical support, training, research cooperation, joint programming, and civilian and military secondments to African institutions. The Nordic countries have been actively engaged in peace diplomacy, support for peace operations, countering violent extremism and fostering inclusive peace, including by promoting the women and youth peace and security agendas, supporting local ownership and African agency, and collaborating with African and Nordic non-governmental and civil society actors. Support has been provided to the AU and a number of other regional and sub-regional institutions, and the key priority areas have been the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. In order to further strengthen African-Nordic cooperation, we offer the following three recommendations:

1. **Strategic partnerships:** Historically, the African-Nordic relationship was framed in terms of the development and humanitarian assistance provided by the Nordic countries to their African partners. As this report shows, the Nordic countries have also used official development assistance (ODA) to finance a large proportion of their support for Africa in the area of peace and security. However, the motivations for support in the area of peace and security are geopolitical – both in terms of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security, and in terms of developing and maintaining strategic partnerships in the context of a changing global order. As African capacity and agency grows – and the Nordic countries have made a significant contribution to assisting the AU and African countries to build capacity in the area of peace and security – the African-Nordic relationship has been – and must continue to be – transformed from a donor-recipient relationship into a relationship guided by strategic partnership that is mutually beneficial and that assists both African and Nordic countries to pursue their peace and security interests.
2. **The African-Nordic niche:** Although African-Nordic cooperation has been diverse and has covered a broad spectrum of thematic areas, the priorities for most countries have been peace diplomacy, democracy, human rights and WPS. Increasingly, the theme of climate, peace and security is also becoming an important one for African-Nordic cooperation. While the relationship needs to be strategic (and thus informed by the needs and interests of both the African and the Nordic partners), it would be useful for both sides to have a clear understanding of the comparative advantage and focus areas of the relationship in the area of peace and security. Both sides have multiple strategic partnership frameworks; and for the African-Nordic partnership to be sustained, its comparative advantage needs to be clear to all partners.
3. **The AU Peace Fund:** As this report highlights, African institutions like the African Union have developed significant capabilities in the area of peace and security over the past two decades. However, one of the main challenges hindering Africa's agency is the continent's lack of financial resources. One of the ways in which the AU is addressing this challenge is by revitalising the AU Peace Fund. Two characteristics of Nordic support have been highlighted in this report: first, it is flexible, in that it has adapted to the evolving needs of African partners; and second, it has helped to strengthen African agency – i.e. it has invested in African institutions, rather than in direct interventions. Providing catalytic support to the AU Peace Fund will build on these characteristics of Nordic support and will meaningfully assist the AU in further developing this important instrument of the APSA.

Part 1

Nordic country studies



Gulf of Aden, May 2009. A seizure team, operating as part of Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151), captures suspected pirates. As a maritime power, Denmark holds counter-piracy as one of its top priorities in international peace and security cooperation. Denmark has contributed to CTF-151, a multinational naval task force set up as a response to piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Photo: Eric L. Beauregard, Flickr.

Denmark

12 EMBASSIES IN AFRICA



Denmark

Jakob Dreyer

Denmark has engaged in developmental efforts on the African continent for over half a century. Although the emphasis on peace and security in conflict-torn areas is not new, it has played an increasingly central role in Denmark's involvement since 2012. The country emphasises a whole-of-government approach that combines developmental and security dimensions. This approach is anchored in the cross-ministerial Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), which has expanded significantly since its initiation in 2010. In the support to countries and regions that experience violent conflict, Denmark is generally more willing than the other Nordic countries to use military means. Its approach is also characterised by a big emphasis on integrating climate mitigation and adaptation efforts into its peace and security engagements.

Denmark focuses its peace and security efforts on the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. As a maritime power, it also focuses on anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea. Militarily, the country has supported multilateral and regional efforts, including the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Operation Barkhane and NATO's anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. In recent years, Denmark has partnered with and advised local actors such as the Kenyan navy, Ghana's maritime special operations force and the Eastern African Standby Force (EASF). Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Denmark has channelled more political attention and resources to Ukraine and has focused on bolstering Danish and European internal security. This has put a strain on Danish defence resources. Still, the country remains committed to working with its African partners to support peacebuilding, human rights and democratic development, but now primarily through economic support and advisory work.

1. Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes

Denmark's peace and security involvement prioritises conflict prevention and support for peace processes. While traditionally it has not prioritised conflict mediation to the extent that, for example, Norway has, comprehensive support for conflict prevention and peace processes plays an increasingly central role. Denmark is also heavily involved in international and regional organisations promoting these agendas. Here, Denmark works through the UN and the European Union (EU), as well as the African Union (AU).

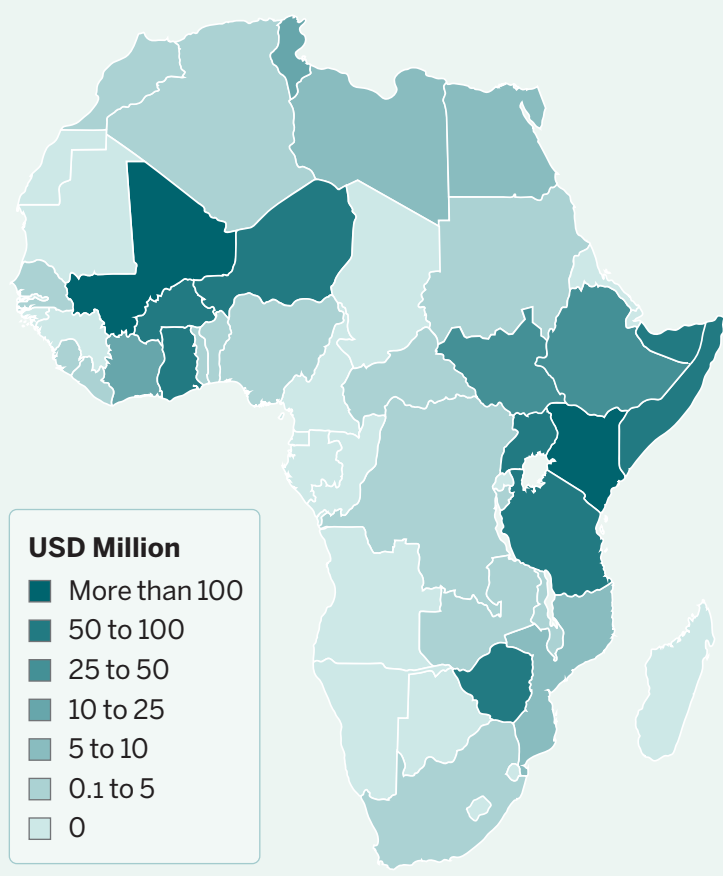
Kenya

Denmark has had ties with Kenya since 1963, when it became independent; and Kenya was the biggest recipient of Danish funding in peace and security, receiving USD 165 million in the period 2012–2021. Kenya is a key priority country for Denmark because of its economic and political role in East Africa, its security role through its borders and ties with Somalia, and its coast relatively close to piracy-ridden waters of the Somali Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden. As a maritime power, Denmark has maintained its focus on this issue, despite the decline in piracy incidents in these areas in recent years. Reflecting Denmark's wider priorities, the funding is allocated to both resilience and peace, democracy and human rights, as well as to green growth and

climate adaptation. As Denmark does not have an embassy in Somalia, and is to close its embassy in Tanzania, the Danish embassy in Nairobi is a hub that also administers Denmark’s engagement across the region. Through funding from the PSF, Denmark is engaged with its Kenyan partners in countering cross-border violence and organised crime. Denmark supports the EASF with a civilian and a police advisor, as well as the Kenyan navy, to help increase its capacity for maritime operations to counter piracy and other forms of sea-based crime. Denmark also provides multilateral support for the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya to train African soldiers, as well as civilian personnel in peace support operations.

Denmark's peace and security cooperation with Africa: Kenya and Mali – Denmark's top priority countries

Peace and security as share of Denmark's total ODA per country



USD Million

- More than 100
- 50 to 100
- 25 to 50
- 10 to 25
- 5 to 10
- 0.1 to 5
- 0

TOP PRIORITY COUNTRIES

In absolute numbers (USD Million)

1. Kenya	165	27%
2. Mali	155	33%
3. Tanzania	74	12%
4. Somalia	70	18%
5. Uganda	64	12%
6. Burkina Faso	58	15%
7. Zimbabwe	56	48%
8. Ghana	56	17%
9. Niger	50	28%
10. South Sudan	36	16%

In relative numbers (USD per inhabitant)

1. Mali	7.6
2. Somalia	4.4
3. Zimbabwe	3.8
4. South Sudan	3.2
5. Kenya	3.1
6. Burkina Faso	2.8
7. Niger	2.1
8. Ghana	1.8
9. Libya	1.5
10. Uganda	1.4

Denmark's official development assistance (ODA) to peace and security cooperation in Africa. Cumulated 2012 to 2021. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Somalia

Since Denmark resumed its engagement in 1998, Somalia has been a top priority: it received USD 70 million in the period 2012–2021. Denmark’s approach combines political dialogue, humanitarian and development aid, and stabilisation initiatives. Through these instruments, it endeavours to support stabilisation and security, human rights, refugee efforts and poverty reduction. Somaliland and Puntland have been key Danish priority areas. As the country has become more stable, so central and southern regions of Somalia have also received support. Denmark likewise supports the reintegration of former al-Shabaab soldiers into society and democratic development among others, through the Somalia Stability Fund.

The Sahel

Denmark works with security forces and local communities across the Sahel region to counter violence, terrorism, organised crime and irregular immigration. Along with Norway, Denmark has focused its efforts on the Liptako-Gourma cross-border area, comprising Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Here, Denmark and its international partners have prioritised improving relations between the local civilian population and security forces. The efforts have also included conflict mediation processes, democratic oversight over security forces and efforts to improve respect for human rights, international law including the laws of armed conflict. In the Sahel, Denmark planned to increase its presence in Burkina Faso and Niger. However, following the coup in Burkina Faso in September 2022, Denmark scaled down its support and cooperation with the central government. And after the coup in Niger in July 2023, Denmark announced that it would halt all support to the country.

The European Union (EU)

Since 2012, EU involvement in security matters and wider diplomatic and developmental engagement in Africa has grown. Thus, as an EU member, Denmark indirectly supports a wide range of EU-led activities and initiatives, including representations, bilateral support, and partnerships with the African Union and regional actors. Denmark is also actively engaged in four of the EU’s five civilian missions on the African continent and contributes financially to the European Peace Facility.

The Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF)

A standout Danish financial tool in peace and security has been the Peace and Stabilisation Fund, cofounded and organised by the Prime Minister’s Office and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Justice. The fund was launched to ensure cross-ministerial cooperation, which builds on expertise from across central government. It aims to enable a flexible, whole-of-government approach at the intersection between security and development. The fund was initiated in 2010 and

has increased its budget from USD 23 million in its first year to about USD 73 million per year in 2020 and 2021. On the African continent, countries in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region have been the most important partners in projects funded by the PSF. As part of the PSF, Denmark has centrally pooled its support for UN peace-keeping and stabilisation with a budget of USD 400,000–700,000 per year, an amount which is set to increase to USD 1.76–2.2 million from 2022–2024.

2. Women, peace and security (WPS)

Denmark supports programmes focusing on women's rights and gender equality more broadly. However, compared to, for example, Sweden, gender is not as high a priority for Denmark. In line with the UN's work to protect and encourage the positive impact of women in conflict resolution, Denmark now endeavours to integrate a gender perspective into its whole-of-government approach, thus mainstreaming women and girls' needs and rights into its work on peace and security. Denmark is also a major contributor to the UN Peacebuilding Fund, focusing on WPS.

Ghana

Denmark has had a long partnership with Ghana, a priority country since 1989. In 2013, Denmark allocated significant multi-annual funding to it (USD 46 million). Here, a key priority was health rights. Among other projects, Denmark has provided funding for the Christian Health Association of Ghana and facilitated political dialogue on poverty and gender equality, including sexual and reproductive rights. It has also prioritised funding for the allocation of public goods and good governance for women, and more broadly. However, in view of Ghana's economic and political stability, the development aid programme was phased out in 2020. The partnership now focuses on trade relations, including women's role in the economy and military cooperation. Denmark supports cross-cutting initiatives in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), focusing on gender equality and youth voices.

Horn of Africa

Although WPS has generally not been integrated strategically, women's role in peace processes has been a focus area in Denmark's work in the Somalia Stability Fund (SSF). Denmark focuses on work to support the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and implementing UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in Somalia. Denmark also backs the World Bank's efforts to support social security and human rights, including countering gender-based violence.

3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are top priorities for Denmark. With USD 367 million, human rights constituted the single largest area of Danish peace and security engagement in Africa in the period 2012–2021. Close to 90 per cent of the human rights funding was bilateral. Democratic participation and civil society formed Denmark's second most-important priority area, as it received USD 318 million from 2012 to 2021, with about two thirds of the funding allocated bilaterally.

Tanzania

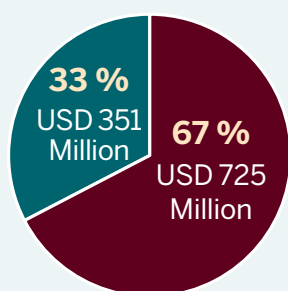
Tanzania became Denmark's first African development partner in 1963. It has been the all-time biggest recipient of Danish aid and was the third-biggest recipient from 2012 to 2021, receiving USD 74 million. In Tanzania, Denmark has prioritised human rights, with an emphasis on economic and social activities, particularly poverty reduction. However, given its emphasis on conflict-ridden countries further north on the continent, Denmark has announced that it will close its embassy in the country in 2024.

Kenya

As part of Denmark's long-term partnership with Kenya, a key focus is on democratic development. Here, Denmark focuses on democratic participation, rule of law and capacity building, which are integral parts of the long-term strategy to prevent and tackle violent political conflicts in the country and the wider region. The engagement includes top-down projects with the central government,

mostly organised through multilateral organisations such as the World Bank. Further, Denmark also works at a regional level in Kenya to support decentralised solutions to public needs, such as a strengthened progressive tax system and public service provision throughout the country.

Denmark's peace and security cooperation in Africa: Human rights at the top of the agenda



Denmark's foreign aid to peace and security cooperation in Africa

Official development assistance (ODA), cumulated 2012 to 2021.

Total USD 1,076 Million
(17 % of Denmark's total ODA to Africa)

■ Multilateral
■ Bilateral



Denmark's foreign aid to peace and security cooperation in Africa, in total and by key area. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Uganda

Denmark has been engaged in Uganda since the 1980s, and that country remains one of its important East African partners. Uganda received USD 64 million in the period 2012–2021. In particular, inclusive development, democracy and regional stabilisation are key target areas for Denmark's engagement in the country. Denmark has traditionally focused on good governance, human rights and an independent judiciary. From 2018 to 2022, it provided USD 47 million to support civil society actors, the judiciary and the local provision of public goods. Recognising Uganda's important regional role in welcoming refugees and tackling cross-border terrorism and crime, Denmark has supported the country's refugee efforts.

4. Peace operations and stabilisation

Denmark has a long tradition of participating in multilateral peace operations in Africa. It continues to support peace and stabilisation operations financially, but the deployment of Danish ground troops is at a historic low, and those still deployed primarily serve in an advisory capacity. For civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, Denmark allocated USD 304 million in the period 2012–2021, with just over half of the funding allocated through multilateral institutions. Key priorities for Denmark's peace efforts in Africa have been the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions, often funded through the PSF.

Mali

Denmark has had an embassy in Mali for decades, but following the outbreak of military conflict in 2012, it expanded its focus from development and humanitarian aid to include security and conflict-related engagements. The deteriorating humanitarian situation, growing instability throughout the Sahel, and European and Danish concerns about terrorism, irregular migration and cross-border crime made Mali a high priority. Denmark has been active in MINUSMA since 2014 and supported the operation with personnel, other assets and funding. A Danish general headed MINUSMA in 2015–2016, and Denmark has deployed a transport aircraft to the operation three times. Furthermore, the country has contributed special operation forces, deployed to Gao, and staff officers located in the mission headquarters. Denmark also participated in the French-led Operation Barkhane from 2019 to 2022, contributing a helicopter based in Gao and special operation forces to the Takuba Task Force. However, when the Malian government withdrew its support for the operation, France and Denmark withdrew their troops. On 16 June 2023, Mali urged MINUSMA to leave the country, and on 30 June the UN Security Council decided to wind up the mission. France, the UK, Germany and other major contributors had earlier announced their withdrawal from MINUSMA, and now the remaining troops are set to leave the country no later than December 2023. Consequently, Denmark now emphasises its engagement in the other coastal states of West Africa, especially Ghana.

Anti-piracy efforts

Denmark is one of the world's largest commercial shipping nations and prioritises anti-piracy efforts in East and West Africa. In the Horn of Africa, Denmark has prioritised an anti-piracy campaign and has been developing a rule of law framework to tackle piracy since 2008. It has contributed significantly to the maritime coalition force Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Task Forces 150 and 151, as well as NATO's counter-piracy operation Ocean Shield. It also contributed a Challenger patrol aircraft. Denmark has on occasions assumed command of both Ocean Shield and CMF Task Force 151. Since the decline in piracy in the Gulf of Aden, it has focused on preventive efforts. This includes capacity building, working with the EASF to develop military and civilian capacities. In 2021, the Danish frigate Esbern Snare was deployed to the Gulf of Guinea to counter piracy. However, Denmark returned the frigate to Danish waters in February 2022 to focus on local security concerns in the tense week leading up to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Denmark remains active in anti-piracy operations, including in the Gulf of Guinea, and has pro-

vided military advisors to the embassies of Nigeria and Ghana. Furthermore, it supports a maritime peace and stabilisation programme of USD 29 million to help build coastal states' capacity to tackle piracy, focusing on Nigeria, Ghana and Cameroon. Since 2022, Denmark has also supported the Ghana Navy Special Boat and capacity-building exercises, including Obangane Express.

The United Nations

Denmark has a long tradition of participating in UN missions, and has deployed Danish soldiers and diplomats since the first missions in the 1940s. As for UN missions in Africa, it has contributed to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and MINUSMA. After South Sudan gained independence in 2011, Denmark supported UNMISS with staff officers and observers. From 2014 to 2016, a Danish diplomat served as the Secretary-General's Special Representative and headed the UN's work in South Sudan. Denmark's engagement in South Sudan ended in 2020. The country also had a small contingent of advisors serving in UNMIL from 2003 to 2016, and a Danish diplomat led the mission from 2007 to 2011. Among the UN missions in Africa, MINUSMA has been Denmark's top priority over the last decade; but it has scaled down the deployment of personnel, and the mission is scheduled to end by the close of 2023. Denmark now tries to find a balance between an increased emphasis on territorial security in its own neighbourhood and the deployment of military personnel to international peace operations. Considering Denmark's long-term involvement as well as its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2025 to 2026, Denmark's involvement in the UN's peace and security is on track to continue, but mostly through means other than Danish boots on the ground.

5. Climate, peace and security

Denmark has for decades supported climate action with a focus on developing sustainable energy systems. More recently the link between climate change, peace and security has become a high-level, cross-cutting priority in Denmark's engagements in Africa. In this regard, the country emphasises an approach that combines developmental, security and economic elements to supply sustainable resource solutions to partner countries. Consequently, mitigation and adaptation efforts for Africa's climate-vulnerable communities play a growing role in Danish peace and security efforts in Africa.

Ethiopia

Since 2016, Denmark has had a climate partnership with Ethiopia to help the country ensure electricity for all by 2025. Since the peace treaty was reached between Ethiopia's central government and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in 2022, Denmark has also worked to ensure that the energy transition can help boost Ethiopia's economic and political development, in order to prevent new outbreaks of conflict. Denmark endeavours to help Ethiopia develop new sustainable energy resources, emphasising wind, long-term planning and security of supply in its work with Ethiopia's Ministry of Energy. After the 2022 peace treaty, Denmark pledged USD 21 million (DKK 144 million) to tackle post-conflict humanitarian challenges and drought, which has plagued the country for years.

Somalia

In recent years, Denmark has increasingly endeavoured to develop comprehensive climate security activities that integrate climate action and peacebuilding efforts. This is done through its engagement with its Somali partners (for example, the Somalia Stability Fund) and early recovery initiatives in newly recovered areas. Denmark is also running a pilot project in Somalia with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the Berghof Foundation. The project aims to deepen understanding of the relationship between global warming, stability and conflict, focusing on resource management, demographic development and environmental changes.

Conclusion

Since 2012, Denmark has remained committed to peace and security efforts in Africa and has increasingly prioritised stabilisation relative to traditional development. Consequently, the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa have become top-priority regions for Denmark. With the PSF and its broader engagements, the country has endeavoured to develop a whole-of-government and regional approach that cuts across dimensions such as development, humanitarian aid, peace, security, economic reforms and trade. Issues such as gender equality and inclusion, environmental degradation and, most importantly, climate action are increasingly integrated into the agendas of Denmark's peace and security efforts.

Despite Russia's war in Ukraine, which has intensified Denmark's prioritisation of national and European security, peace and security on the African continent remain high Danish priorities. With the growing emphasis on geopolitical strife, Denmark now signals a 'pragmatic idealist' approach, which focuses on equal partnerships and the needs of African partners. In its campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council in 2025–2026, Denmark reiterates that peace and security on the African continent are Danish priority areas in the years to come. Given Denmark's focus on European security, these efforts are increasingly conducted through training, advisory and through regional and multilateral actors, rather than Danish boots on the ground.

Finland

12 EMBASSIES
IN AFRICA



Nkhata Bay, Malawi, March 2020. Participants at a mediation training, organised by CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Foundation in cooperation with local FemWise-Africa members and the Malawi Police Service (MPS). Supporting actors involved in conflict resolution at all levels is one of Finland's top priorities in international peace and security cooperation. Photo: Erika Paakinen, CMI.



Finland

Prince Duah Agyei

Finnish foreign and security policy is grounded in ‘bilateral relations, cooperation and influencing within the European Union (EU), and the rules-based international system and multilateral cooperation under international law’ (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2020, p. 10). In Africa, however, Finnish foreign policy has historically held a peripheral position, primarily surfacing first in missionary work and later in humanitarian and moral contexts. Nevertheless, over the past few decades, Africa has received increased attention in Finnish foreign and development policies. Alongside the UN, the EU and its Nordic partners, Finland is engaging with Africa in diverse areas and ways reflected in *Finland’s Africa Strategy*, published by the Foreign Ministry in 2021, with the intention of expanding the relationship that Finland has with the African Union (AU), African regional organisations and individual countries through equally advantageous political and economic endeavours.

Finnish peace and security engagements in Africa partly emanate from Finland’s role in the EU, and the EU’s proximity to and relations with Africa. The extent to which Finnish and EU security is interlinked with Africa, is obvious ‘when the repercussions of, for example, the political instability and the conflict being further exacerbated by the various operators involved in Libya as well as the situation in the regions of Sahel and the Horn of Africa’ extends to Europe in the form of increased risk of violent extremism and illegal migration. Thus, by contributing to peace and security in Africa, Finland safeguards its own security – and that of the EU, which is interlinked. What perhaps remains to be seen is what the implications of Finland’s new NATO membership will be for its peace and security support to Africa.

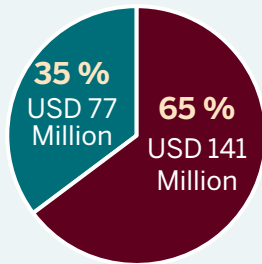
Finland is also motivated by solidarity and shared values to assist Africa’s development and stability – for example, by supporting the AU’s Agenda 2063. As stated by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, ‘Finland’s partnership with Africa is motivated by solidarity deeply rooted in the attitudes and values of the Finnish people and by what we believe are our joint interests’ (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2011, p. 2).

Finland supports peace and security in Africa through assistance in, among others, the areas of democracy and civil society, civilian peacebuilding, prevention and resolution of conflicts, human rights, empowerment support for women, and international peacekeeping operations. While Finland is engaged in the entire continent, as of 2021 its priority areas of focus were the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and Libya. This, however, in no way discounts the mounting security challenges that Africa faces in other parts of the continent, including Mozambique, as well as in other countries and regions which Finland is also committed to supporting, as will be discussed below.

1. Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes

Mediation has been emphasised in Finnish foreign policy since 2010, and Finland not only has considerable experience within the field, but also a proven track record of success. The country positively supports actors involved in conflict resolution at all levels and reinforces international mediation efforts. Accordingly, a Centre for Mediation was set up in 2020 under the Foreign Ministry’s Political Department to facilitate these activities. Finnish-based organisations – the CMI Martti

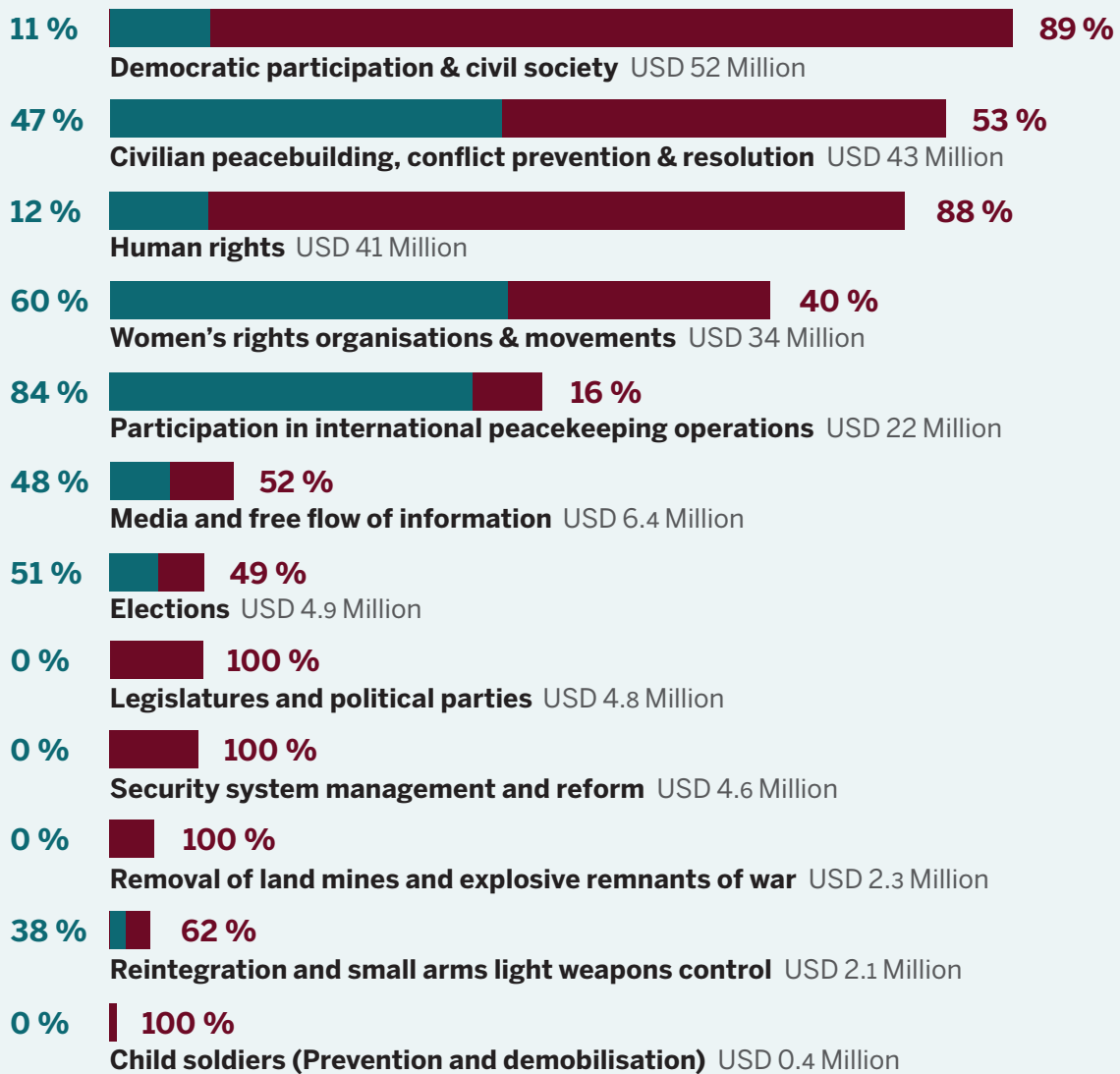
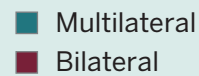
Finland's peace and security cooperation in Africa: Democratic participation and civil society at the top of the agenda



Finland's foreign aid to peace and security cooperation with Africa

Official development assistance (ODA), cumulated 2012 to 2021.

Total USD 218 Million
(8 % of Finland's total ODA to Africa)



Ahtisaari Peace Foundation and Finn Church Aid – have been active in Africa and engaged in peace processes in the Horn of Africa (Somalia), South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Libya and elsewhere. Finnish organisations have also actively supported AU mediation capacities.

Earlier support for Africa contributed to the establishment of the AU Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, officially referred to as FemWise-Africa. Finland also contributed to enhancing the AU's internal development of lessons and knowledge from Africa's own mediation experiences, as well as its capacity to deploy and support mediators and envoys. Current support for mediation in Africa is mainly through the AU's Mediation Support Project, with a specific emphasis on engaging with youth, in which CMI is the implementing partner for Finland. Finland also supports mediation and conflict resolution at the level of the regional economic communities and other regional bodies. At times, it also works with individual countries: a classic example in this regard is the agreement on mediation cooperation signed with South Africa on 25 April 2023.

Finland also has a focus on the role of religious leaders and the influence they can have on conflict and conflict resolution. One example is the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers headed by Finn Church Aid and supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. Another is the Central African Republic, where Finland has supported dialogue among religious entities.

Finland has also emphasised the potential role of technological innovation, including artificial intelligence (AI) and big data, in enhancing the information dimension of peace and mediation. One area in this context is cyber security, where Finland has established itself as a country with special expertise. In 2017, it established the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats to produce timely assessment of hybrid threats and related vulnerabilities in the twenty-first century; its work is also increasingly of interest to Africa.

2. Women, peace and security

Finland supports the UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2242, which underscore the effectiveness of women in all stages of conflict. Finland has its own national action plan to oversee the implementation of resolution 1325 in and by Finland.

In Kenya, Finland is providing support towards enhancing women's role in leadership and participation in peace processes through UN Women projects. Together with civil society organisations, it has also provided support for gender-based violence prevention.

Building on its policy of inclusiveness, Finland's strategy for development cooperation with the MENA region, the Middle East and North Africa, between 2021 and 2024 is seeking to reinforce inclusivity and sustainability, boosting trade and entrepreneurial development as a way of helping women access decent jobs.

Currently operational in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and with estimated investments of EUR 1.22 billion (as of 2022) – half of it invested in Africa – Finnfund is helping to improve socio-economic aspects in these areas, including (but not limited to) gender-related considerations.

Another area of special focus for Finland is youth. This is important, as over 60 per cent of the population of Africa is under 25 years of age. Under the auspices of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, some selected African youths were able to meet their peers from around the world in Jakarta, to share ideas and experiences on violent radicalism. This was supported by the foreign ministry, in collaboration with the AU and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (the German Agency for International Cooperation). Finland also provided support for the Nigerian action plan on youth, peace and security. Currently, the country is supporting Kenya in developing its national action plan, and, according to a source at Finland's ministry for foreign affairs, it is anticipated that it will continue to support other countries to develop their own plans. Finland has also successfully piloted a four-day capacity-building training session on peace mediation for 20 young Kenyan diplomats. A similar capacity-building event was also launched in Algeria by Finland's ministry for foreign affairs and CMI.



Bentiu, South Sudan, October 2018. A high-level delegation from the United Nations and African Union visits a camp for internally displaced persons to promote the role of women's participation in the revitalized peace process underway in the conflict-affected country. Among the delegates are Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, and Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, co-chair of AU FemWise. Finland has contributed to the establishment of the AU FemWise network. Photo: Isaac Billy, UNMISS.

The Youth Network for the Lake Chad Region, which aims at promoting the participation of youth in the search for stability among countries around the Lake Chad Basin, has also been receiving continuous support from Finland through CMI ever since its formation in 2019. Finland is also supporting the empowerment and involvement of youth in peace and state-building processes in Somalia, as well as Mozambique.

3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Finland believes that sustainable peace and security is rooted in human rights, democracy and the rule of law. According to the OECD/DAC data, between 2012 and 2021 Finland spent USD 51.7 million on democratic engagements and support for civil societies, both bilaterally (USD 5.7 million) and multilaterally (USD 46 million).

In the MENA region, for example, in addition to Finnish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on critical issues such as migration and peace processes, Finland is also promoting democracy in the region. The country is also actively supporting democratic processes in, among others, Ethiopia and Kenya.

4. Peace operations and stabilisation

Finland has since 1956 been deploying personnel for international peacekeeping operations, including in Africa. It continues to assist African crisis management both on its own and alongside the EU, the UN, the AU and related partners. Additionally, Finland is working with the European Peace Facility and the European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP), which is currently under the leadership of a former director general of the Finnish Police Department, Kauko Aaltomaa. Finland is also supporting the proposal that the financial sustainability of African peace support operations should be enhanced via access to the UN’s assessed contribution system.

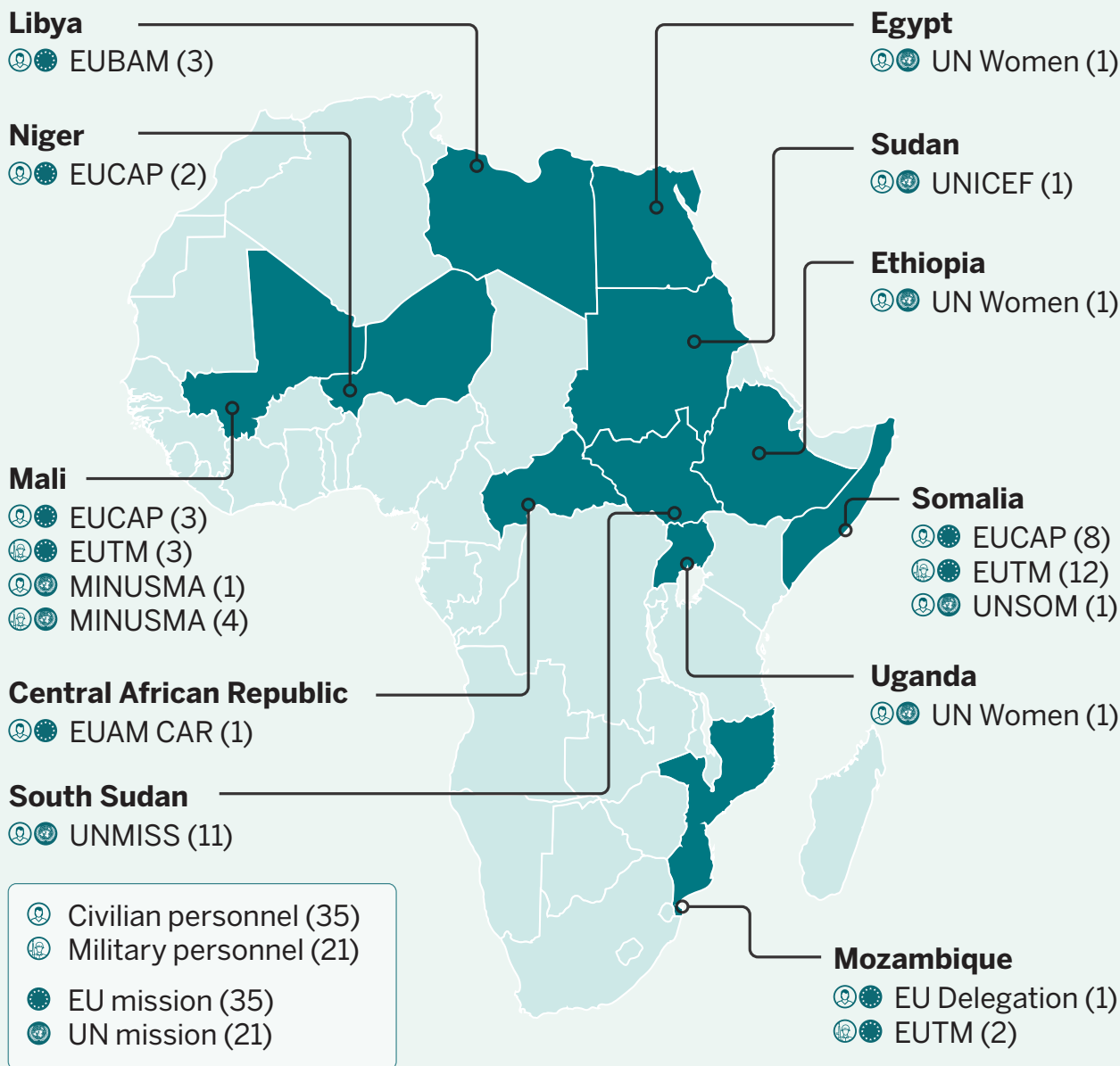
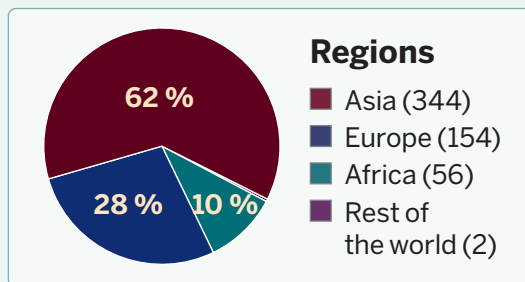
Finnish crisis management falls broadly under military and civilian crisis management. Since 2012, some 160 Finnish personnel have been deployed to UN missions alone (see figures below).

As of February 2023, 28 Finnish military personnel were actively serving in EU training missions in Mali, Mozambique and Somalia, as well as in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).



Finnish personnel in UN missions in Africa. Source: UN Peacekeeping online database on troop and police contributors (data retrieved in August 2023).

Finland's international crisis management staff: 56 out of 556 are seconded to Africa



EUAM CAR, EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (est. 2019); **EUBAM**, EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (est. 2013); **EUCAP**, EU Capacity Building Missions in Mali (est. 2014), Niger (est. 2012) and Somalia (est. 2012, rebranded 2016); **EUTM**, EU Training Missions in Mali (est. 2012), Somalia (est. 2010) and Mozambique (est. 2012); **MINUSMA**, UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (est. 2013); **UNMISS**, UN Mission in South Sudan (est. 2011); **UNSOM**, UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (est. 2013).

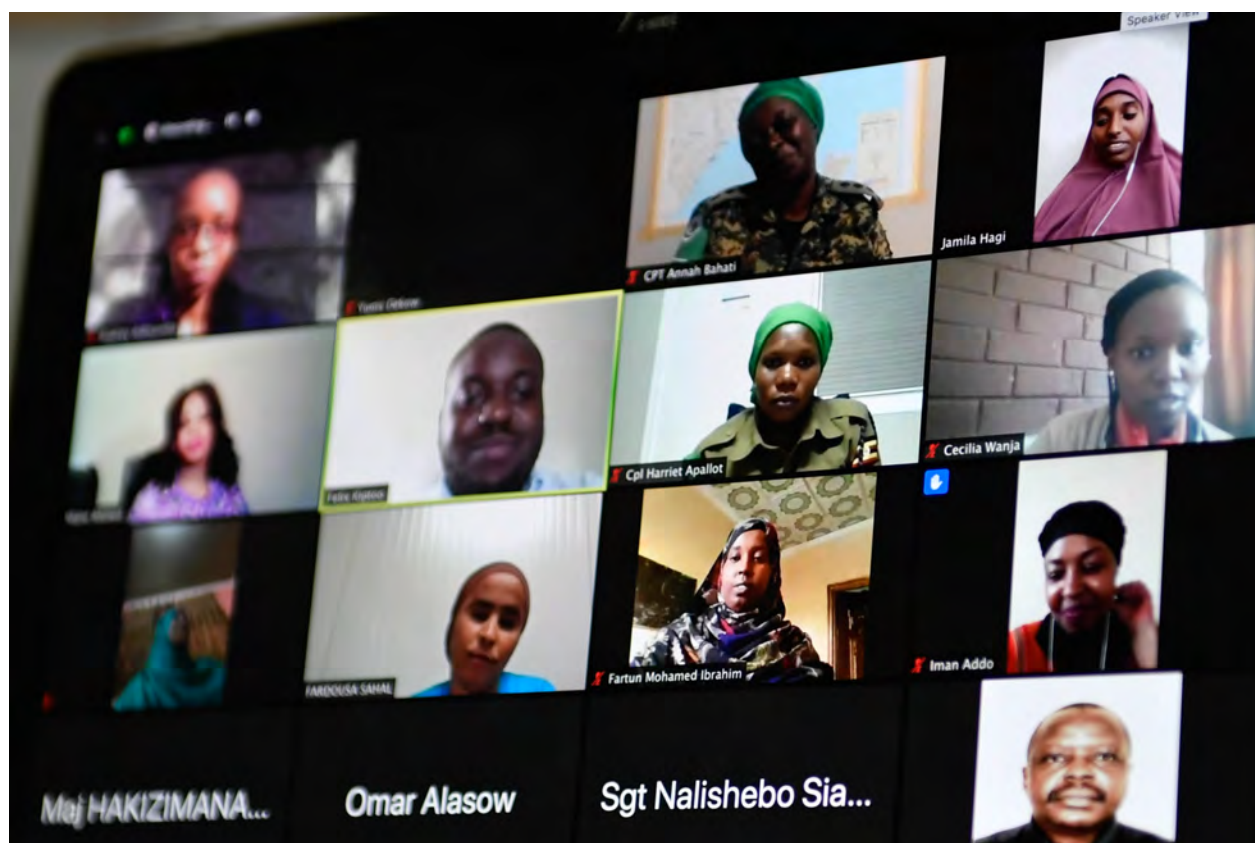
Finland's participation in international crisis management in Africa, June 2023. Numbers are subject to change day to day due to rotations. Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

At a time when the EU is facing challenges in civilian crisis management, due to a lack of interest among its member states, Finland is maintaining, if not increasing, its deployments. The Crisis Management Centre (CMC) is responsible for the training, recruitment and equipping of Finnish personnel for missions abroad, primarily in tandem with the UN, EU and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). According to data from Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as of February 2023 some 33 CMC personnel were serving in Africa in international operations that included deployments to EU initiatives and UN peace operations in Libya, Mali, Niger and Somalia, as well as in UN agencies such as UN Women and the UN Development Programme in countries as varied as Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

5. Climate, peace and security

Africa accounts for only 2–3 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, but suffers excessively from their effects. Finland mainly supports climate action through its development cooperation, aiming to assist communities and natural systems in preparing for and adapting to climate challenges.

In the MENA region, Finland is providing support for climate change mitigation and adaptation. It has also been working together with the region on the facilitation of peaceful dialogue and interactions between various stakeholders under the Helsinki Policy Forum (HPF) since 2014. Under the HPF, a workshop on climate, environment, youth and peace was organised in Helsinki in March 2023, and there are plans to start up conversations on youth participation at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai in December 2023.



Mogadishu, Somalia, October 2020. Participants attend a virtual advocacy training for young women mediation ambassadors organised by the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in collaboration with the International Centre for Peace, Human Rights and Development (IPHRD-Africa). The AU Mediation Support project is one of Finland's flagship programmes for peace and security cooperation in Africa. Photo: Yunis Dekow, AMISOM.

Finland is also supporting the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding with its Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace initiative, which was launched during the Egyptian presidency of the UN Climate Change Conference COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh in November 2022. This was one of the first initiatives to highlight the interlinkages between peace and climate change.

Furthermore, in Ethiopia, Finland is providing support to boost institutions to provide all-inclusive and climate-resilient services, as part of the intended aims of its strategy towards Ethiopia. By building on the many years of support and progress in the forestry and water sectors of Kenya, Finland will be collaborating with other organisations, including academics and NGOs, to enhance Kenya's resilience to climate change. In Tanzania, Finland is working on improving forest-based livelihoods, as well as Tanzanians' resilience to the effects of climate change.

Conclusion

In *Finland's Africa Strategy*, approved by the Finnish government in 2021, not only is new emphasis being given to a whole continent, but cooperation is also being developed on the basis of equal partnership, rather than seeing Africa as a passive receiver of aid. Finland's strategy underscores the contention that peace and security in Africa can help safeguard security in Europe. As such, Finland is actively working on the entire continent to promote peace and enhance security. At the continental level, the AU Mediation Support project remains Finland's flagship programme in its cooperation with African peace and security actors. Moreover, the country is supporting regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa, based on their specific needs and Finland's capacity to help. In addition to its peace and security-related priority countries/areas (the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Libya and increasingly Mozambique), Finland has strategies for development cooperation for MENA, Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, as well as individual country strategies, all of which are underpinned by peace and security considerations.

Iceland

TWO (SOON THREE) EMBASSIES IN AFRICA



Baidoa, Somalia, November 2021. The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO), Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, visits an election centre. Iceland funds the DPPA in an effort to promote democracy and women's contributions to peace and security. Channeling its support to international peace and security cooperation through the UN and other multilateral organs is vital for a small country like Iceland. Photo: Fardosa Hussein, UN Photo.



SIERRA LEONE
Freetown
(to be opened by
the end of 2023)

UGANDA
Kampala

MALAWI
Lilongwe

Iceland

Silja Bára R. Ómarsdóttir and Guðrún Sif Friðriksdóttir

Iceland is the smallest of the five Nordic countries and it thus has the most limited operations abroad. The country's foreign policy primarily emphasises the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and oceanic affairs, and aims to achieve measurable success in eliminating poverty, enhancing the quality of life, and establishing equality, freedom and prosperity in the world. Iceland's foreign service is small, with fewer than 30 embassies, consulates and missions operating abroad in 2023. Of these, two are in Africa: in Lilongwe, Malawi, and Kampala, Uganda. Bilateral relations are predominantly with these two countries. Icelandic relations with Sierra Leone have been growing recently, and Iceland aims to open an embassy in Freetown by the end of 2023. The pillars of Iceland's foreign policy, include focusing on development cooperation for the least developed countries (LDCs), support for gender equality and sustainable use of live aquatic resources.

Respect for sovereignty, international law and multilateral cooperation is vital for a small country like Iceland. Like any other country, it must fulfil international obligations, such as protecting human rights and responding to global crises. The values that shape Iceland's international activities include respect for democracy, tolerance, justice and unity. Iceland has reacted to the increased need for humanitarian assistance due to conflict, instability, climate change and economic hardship. It supports the UN agencies that respond to crises, such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Iceland follows the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recommendation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. To attain the Nexus, Iceland supports the Icelandic Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, along with civil society organisations that play a vital role in emergency and humanitarian assistance. Iceland has a Standby Partnership arrangement with UN agencies engaged in humanitarian action. Deployments range from three months to a maximum of one year. The number of deployments and types of assignments depends on the needs of the UN and Iceland's priorities. The UN administers the selection of candidates. Iceland's focus area in Africa covers countries south of the Sahara, but it participated in the Central Sahel pledging conference, which dealt with a region where the humanitarian, development and security situation has deteriorated in recent years. Iceland supported OCHA, the UNHCR and WFP in regional country-based pool funds for countries in the Sahel region, namely Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in 2020–2021. In Africa, Iceland supports various countries and regions that need humanitarian assistance, such as Tigray in Northern Ethiopia due to conflict; emergency assistance due to droughts in Somalia; and the fight against sexual violence in South Sudan.

Iceland's ministry for foreign affairs cooperates with multilateral institutions, with an emphasis on the World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women and the UN Population Fund. Iceland's support within Africa mainly focuses on development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and emergency response. It has funded key UN institutions in those matters – CERF, OCHA, WFP and UNHCR. Iceland's development cooperation in Africa is also notable, since 43 per cent of the budget of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs goes toward development cooperation, and of that 31 per cent goes towards Africa. According to the OECD, Iceland's contributions toward the

Human-Development-Peace Nexus in 2021 resulted in 79 per cent going to development cooperation, 12 per cent to humanitarian assistance and 9 per cent to peace processes.

Iceland's global contribution to peace and security has been limited, although it did send peacekeepers to international missions in 1950, when two Icelandic officers were dispatched to Palestine. The Icelandic Crisis Response Unit, Iceland's peacekeeping unit, was established in 2001 and has since contributed personnel to the missions of international organisations such as NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), UNIFEM/UN Women, mostly in post-conflict regions, although some seconded personnel have also been placed in conflict zones. In some instances, a contingent of Icelandic personnel has been deployed, such as was the case with the 'jeep patrols' in Afghanistan and the air traffic controllers who operated Kabul airport temporarily. Most commonly, however, the Icelandic contribution has consisted of a single person attached to an international operation or another country's contingent.

Iceland's small population and small foreign service mean that its activities abroad are more limited than those of its larger Nordic neighbours, and Iceland must choose its foreign activities carefully. Its participation in peace and security outside its borders has mostly been within Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East: namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine and Afghanistan. Iceland's activities in peace and security in Africa are relatively small and are mostly based on supporting peacekeeping missions, sending out specialists from the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit, and supporting UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

Iceland's goals in development cooperation are to enhance social infrastructure and peace efforts, as well as to protect the earth and sustainable use of natural resources. To achieve these goals, Iceland prioritises the cross-cutting themes of human rights, gender equality and climate change. It should therefore come as no surprise that when it comes to the country's top themes regarding conflict and security in Africa, support for gender equality is the most prominent, and human rights in general is the second-highest priority. Iceland has also contributed to civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, elections, democratic participation and civil society.

1. Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes

Iceland's focus in this category has been on supporting various peace operations and targeted conflict prevention programmes in priority countries. Thus far work on mediation has not been on the agenda for support from Iceland, although the country has participated in the Nordic Women Mediators' Network. The Icelandic team has focused on promoting local women's participation in peace processes, rather than on mediating disputes directly.

Malawi

Iceland supported the UN Global Goals Fund in Malawi in 2021, in cooperation with Ireland. The project aimed at preventing conflict and at working towards peacebuilding on the borders of Malawi and Mozambique. The project's main objective was to implement and maintain an integrated approach to enhance border security, prevent conflict, promote peacebuilding and prevent the spread of violent extremism.

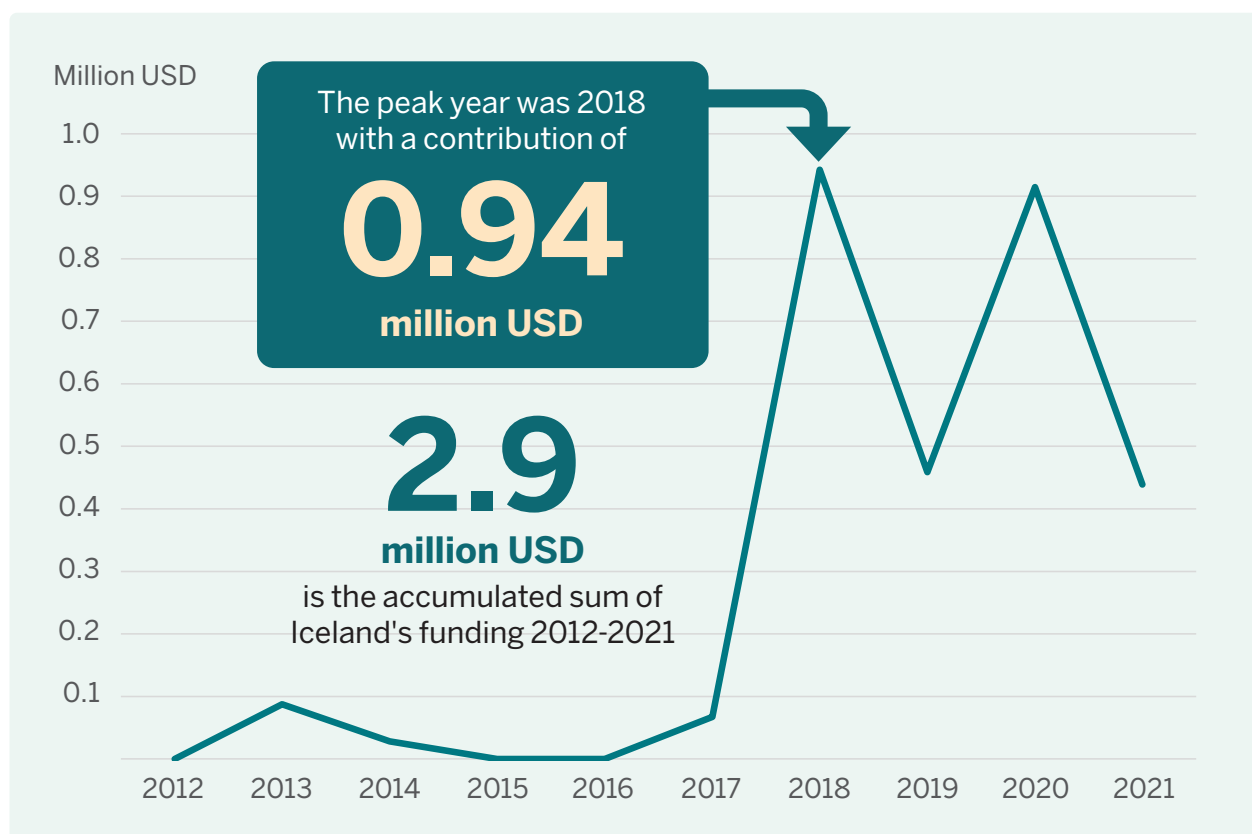
The United Nations

In April 2023, the Icelandic government signed a new contract with the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) for 2023–2026. This is in line with Iceland's commitment to channel its support through UN organs; with this new contract, the funding to the DPPA doubles in size compared to the last agreement. According to the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, the arrangement shows Iceland's trust in the UN's leadership role in peacebuilding and mediation. It is essential to Iceland that the DPPA promote women's contributions to peace and security, which aligns with the country's foreign policy goals on gender equality.

2. Women, peace and security (WPS)

Gender equality is one of the main pillars of Iceland's foreign policy and an important aspect of all of its development cooperation. The figure below shows how Iceland's assistance rose sharply after 2016 and has fluctuated at between USD 0.4 and 0.9 million in the last five years. The WPS agenda is the most significant part of Iceland's support for peace and security in Africa. The work has focused on Iceland's priority countries of Malawi and Uganda. The GRÓ Gender Equality Studies and Training programme (GRÓ-GEST) has operated under the auspices of UNESCO since 2020, but from 2008 it was part of the UN University system. It focuses on training fellows from low-income, conflict and post-conflict countries in promoting gender equality and social justice. Since its inception, GRÓ-GEST has seen the graduation of fellows from Sierra Leone, Ghana, Burkina Faso, South Africa, Namibia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Tunisia, as well as from Asian, American and European countries. While not directly focused on WPS, the fellows, from different sectors of society, are expected to return to their home countries and contribute to gender equality.

Iceland has supported national action plans on WPS in Malawi and Mozambique through UN Women. The grant that Iceland made in 2016 to assist Mozambique in setting up the country's first national action plan on WPS, was the biggest grant Iceland has made to peace and security in Africa since 2011 and partly explains the large rise in expenditure within the WPS agenda from 2016. Iceland has also supported UN Women in Malawi for the gender-equality conference Kigali International Conference Declaration (KICD) in 2013 and 2019. The country has developed a Barbershop Toolbox that looks at ways for men to mobilize and motivate other men to address discriminatory stereotypes of masculinity, and addresses how male leaders can drive this dialogue forward. The Toolbox is part of Iceland's commitments to the HeForShe move-



Iceland's funding to women's rights organisations and institutions in Africa from 2012 to 2021. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

ment, a movement for the advancement of gender equality, initiated in 2014 by the UN. In 2018, the Barbershop Toolbox was launched in Malawi in two districts. Both UN Women and the UN Population Fund have used the Barbershop Toolbox in their programming to further engage men and boys in tackling social norms that may fuel gender-based violence and mobilise men to become agents of change in their societies and work towards gender equality.

3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Human rights are, along with gender equality, one of the main pillars of Iceland's development cooperation. In recent years, democracy, especially through support for electoral integrity, has also become important in the country's general international support programmes. As with other work in Africa, the initiatives within the continent focus mainly on Iceland's priority countries of Malawi, Uganda and, since recently, Sierra Leone.

Ethiopia

Iceland provided support to the UNICEF office in Ethiopia in 2018 in the form of a seconded specialist in children's rights in emergencies. The work of the specialist focused on registering and following the cases of children in need in Ethiopia.

Sierra Leone

In 2021, Iceland started a pilot project in Sierra Leone, in collaboration with Save the Children. The project aims at protecting school-aged children against all types of violence, particularly gender-based and sexual violence. Election support and election observation are important parts of the support provided globally by Iceland. It has provided several participants to both short-term and long-term election observation missions of international organisations, and measures are taken to ensure the equal representation of both men and women in the recruitment of observers. Iceland also provided support to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for the Sierra Leone elections in June 2023 and a two-year project that aims to strengthen democracy and promote peaceful elections, with an emphasis on ensuring opportunities for all to vote, especially women, young people and people with disabilities.

Malawi

Iceland has also focused on broader work on democracy, with a particular specialisation on the participation of women in its main priority country, Malawi. In 2019, it supported a delegation from Malawi to travel to the Reykjavík Global Forum, a conference for women political leaders. Through Action Aid Malawi, Iceland also supported a project aimed at increasing the participation of women and representatives in political positions within the district of Mangochi, which had one of the lowest rates of female political participation in the country.

Uganda

In 2020, Iceland provided support to the UNDP in its efforts to strengthen the election processes in Uganda for the 2021 presidential and parliamentary elections. The support was in the form of a one-year project aimed at increasing transparency and participation in the elections, boosting the institutional capacity for stakeholders and contributing to peacebuilding. The support began prior to the elections and remained both during and after them.

4. Peace operations and stabilisation

For a country like Iceland, which has a very small population but a high level of education, support to institutions via the secondment of individuals has been an important part of the support provided to peace and security in Africa. Iceland has supported peacekeeping missions with

grants, but as a country without a military it has not sent out military personnel to missions. The country has, however, contributed civilian personnel to various peacekeeping missions since the 1950s. Since the 1990s, this has become increasingly important to Iceland's international activities, and Iceland's Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) was established in 2001. ICRU's activities mainly consist of contributions to multilateral organisations and the secondment of civil experts to the field. In 2014, the Icelandic government increased its contributions to NATO by providing civilian specialists in those fields in which the country has expertise (usually gender equality). Iceland supports all the UN missions in Africa through its assessed contributions from the UN.

As is clear from the lists of general contributions to peacekeeping forces, as well as from the posts to which Icelandic specialists have been recruited by the ICRU in Africa since 2012, gender equality provides a major focus. Iceland has, for example, deployed gender advisors to the WFP in Egypt, Kenya and Mozambique. It has also seconded staff to the UN Peacekeeping Office in Senegal and to UNICEF in Somalia.

5. Climate, peace and security

The Icelandic government has operated the GRÓ Land Restoration Training Programme (GRÓ-LRT) since 2007. The GRÓ-LRT runs short courses and a six-month training programme for fellows from partnership countries, initially Mongolia and Uganda. More recently, fellows from Namibia, Lesotho, Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Egypt and Tunisia, in addition to Central Asian countries, have received training at LRT and returned to work in their home countries. Furthermore, the Icelandic Red Cross, in collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, has supported a tree-planting project in Sierra Leone since 2021, aimed at reducing the impact of climate change and enhancing food security in the country.

Conclusion

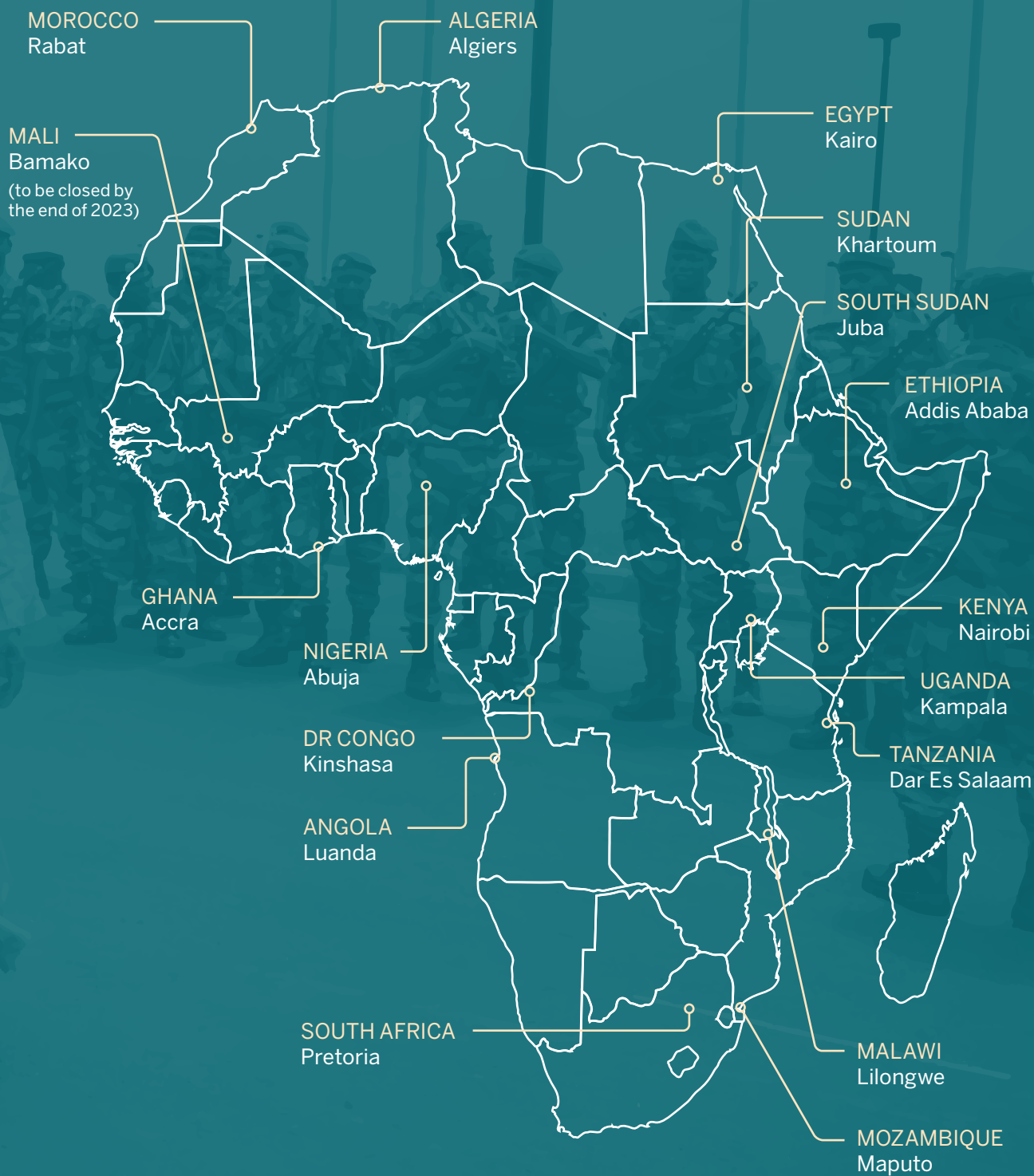
Iceland's small population and its lack of armed forces mean that the country's cooperation with Africa centres on fields that reflect its strengths, such as human rights, gender equality, crisis management and humanitarian assistance, and the strengthening of social infrastructures such as health and education. Iceland has recently increased its focus on combating climate change and strengthening resilience in its bilateral cooperation. Additionally, since one of the main priority countries in Africa is Malawi (along with Uganda), which is a relatively peaceful country, a fairly small proportion of the work done by Iceland in Africa falls under peace and security work. For Iceland, the greatest emphasis in development cooperation linked to peace and security is on the WPS agenda. Given the country's commitment to working on gender equality and its interest in being considered a leader on this issue, it is likely that this will continue as a focus area in the future, since it intersects with cooperation on peace and security issues on the African continent. That said, it remains unlikely that Iceland will expand its work beyond its current geographical scope.

Norway

17 EMBASSIES
IN AFRICA



Bamako, Mali, June 2019. Norway's prime minister Erna Solberg and minister of defence Frank Bakke-Jensen visit Mali, where Norway has deployed military officers to MINUSMA. Three years later, in 2022, the Norwegian Camp Bifrost was handed over to the UN. Photo: The Office of the Prime Minister of Norway.



Norway

by *Ingvild Brox Brodtkorb*

Norway's commitment to peace and security in Africa centres around key priorities such as civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, women, peace and security (WPS), human rights, rule of law and civil society, and climate, peace and security. With over 30 years' experience of peace diplomacy, Norway has developed extensive expertise in mediation, reconciliation and conflict resolution, which it draws upon to promote peace and security. Although Norway is a smaller country, with more limited tools and resources than major donors like the US, China or the European Union (EU), it aims to make an impact by concentrating its efforts within specific areas. Due to its engagement in peace and reconciliation efforts, it is actively involved in various conflict-affected countries and regions, participating in peacebuilding efforts from an early stage. Norwegian efforts are based on a willingness to take risks. Norway acknowledges potential setbacks, while emphasising the importance of patience and long-term commitment to support and cooperation.

South Sudan, Somalia and Mali are Norway's top three priority countries within the area of peace and security in Africa. All three were selected as Norway's partner countries within the stabilisation and conflict prevention category of the Partner Country Initiative of the Norwegian Development Policy, launched in 2018. Consequently, Norway established an embassy office in Mogadishu in 2021 and an embassy in Bamako in 2017. Norway's financial support within the area of peace and security between 2012 and 2021 amounted to USD 176 million in South Sudan, USD 151 million in Somalia and USD 99 million in Mali. All three countries share a commonality: the historical presence of Norwegian humanitarian organisations has paved the way for Norway's broader peace and security initiatives.

1. Mediation, conflict resolution and support for peace processes

Conflict resolution and reconciliation are some of Norway's main priorities within the area of peace and security in Africa. It is seen as a prerequisite to preventing, reducing and resolving conflicts and fostering development and prosperity at all levels. Most of Norway's mediation support goes to Sudan and South Sudan, however it also supports peace processes in Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Mali.

South Sudan

Norway's peace and security support to South Sudan is based on a strong sense of historical commitment. Norway, together with the United States and the UK, held a formal facilitator role in the peace negotiations between the government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 2005. It also played an active role in the high-level peace negotiations led in 2018 by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Norway's commitments today rest on implementation of the peace agreement from 2018, which aims to build stability, reduce violence and support the transition to a democratic government. As a Troika member, Norway holds a formal role in the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), which monitors the peace agreement. Moreover, Norway provides financial support to the Ceasefire

and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM). Through NORCAP, the Norwegian Refugee Council's roster mechanism, Norway is currently funding six staff members to RJMEC and CTSAMVM.

Between 2019 and 2022, Norway disbursed USD 22 million to the UN South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund. A significant portion of this funding has been allocated to the UN's reconciliation efforts. Norway also supports dialogue facilitation at the local level through various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including Norwegian Church Aid, the Strømme Foundation, the Norwegian Refugee Council and Norwegian People's Aid, alongside their local partners.

Sudan

Norway's commitment to peace and reconciliation in Sudan today is like South Sudan, also linked to the formal position that Norway has held historically in peace negotiations. Sudan's proximity to the Red Sea and the Gulf States also makes it strategically important. Support for reconciliation efforts is thus also based on the fear of regional instability and the possibility of Sudan turning into a new 'Libya', with spill-over effects in the Sahel and North Africa.

Following the coup d'état in 2021, Norway's support to the national reconciliation process has mainly been through the Sudanese resistance committees. Yet, most of the support has been allocated to NGOs and civil society actors promoting dialogue at the local level. One of Norway's advantages in Sudan and South Sudan is its strong network base at the grassroots level, through its partnerships with NGOs. As such, Norway plays an instrumental role in bringing actors together to engage in dialogue.

South Africa

South Africa's extensive experience with conflict resolution and reconciliation has rendered it an important partner for mediation efforts in Africa. Norway is supporting several South African NGOs to provide training and strengthen the capacity of regional, national and local actors across Africa, to prevent and mitigate conflicts through the means of conflict resolution, mediation and peace negotiations.

Somalia

Norway has appointed a special envoy dedicated to peace and reconciliation efforts in Somalia. Norwegian ongoing efforts revolve around promoting national dialogue between the federal government in Mogadishu and three key elements: 1) al-Shabab; 2) Somaliland; and 3) the other federal member states. Through continuous engagement in dialogue processes, Norway aims to signal to the different Somali actors that it stands ready to assist if the parties decide to engage in formal peace processes.

2. Women, peace and security (WPS)

The WPS agenda is at the heart of Norwegian foreign policy and guides Norway's peace and security efforts in Africa. The country emphasises the causal link between inclusive peace processes and sustainable peace. As such, the inclusion of women right from the early stages of reconciliation and the implementation of peace agreements all the way to broader peacebuilding efforts is vital to foster stability and development. Notably, the inclusion of women in reconciliation processes is believed to facilitate the participation of women in all phases of peace processes. Norway's WPS partner countries in Africa are Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, as well as the African Union (AU).

The African Union

Norway supports the AU Office of the Special Envoy on WPS with earmarked funding through the framework agreement between the AU and Norway. Through the same agreement, Norway

is providing support to strengthen the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). Furthermore, through NORCAP's agreement with the AU, Norway contributes to the capacity building and staffing level of the FemWise Secretariat and secondments of experts to peacebuilding processes across Africa.

Mali

Norway has supported the implementation of the third WPS National Action Plan (NAP) (2019–2023) through UN Women, amounting to approximately USD 2.7 million (2019–2022). Additionally, through the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) Trust Fund, it provides diplomatic and financial support for efforts to include women in all bodies relevant to the peace processes. By contributing approximately USD 2.75 million to École de Maintien de la Paix (EMP) from 2021 to 2024, Norway is supporting the gender training and capacity building of actors central to the peace process.

Mozambique

Mozambique has chosen Norway as its strategic partner for WPS. In 2018, Norway and the Mozambican Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen the political dialogue on gender issues. Norway further supports the implementation of the NAP (2018–2022) through UN Women, with approximately USD 2.16 million (2022–2024), focusing on empowering advocates of gender equality in decision-making and building the capacity of government institutions.

Norway is also supporting women's civil society organisations across Africa to increase women's capacity to participate politically in decision-making and to protect and disseminate knowledge about women's rights. Moreover, Norway contributes to efforts to establish local networks of women mediators in various African countries.

3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Norway considers inclusive democracy, based on the principles of international law and respect for human rights, to be a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security. As such, the promotion of human rights is an integrated part of Norway's efforts in Africa. Integral to this are its efforts to advocate for human rights in local, national and regional fora and to support human rights defenders and civil society organisations. Furthermore, Norway supports efforts to apply a human rights-based approach to security sector reform. This is seen as an important element in the broader debate on financing AU-led peace support operations.

Norway is providing support for the implementation and operationalisation of a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework of the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) through the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The project provides technical assistance to the FC-G5S on mechanisms and measures to mainstream human rights and international humanitarian law. From 2018 to 2021, the contribution amounted to approximately USD 2.9 million to the G5 Sahel Framework and USD 4.6 million to the country offices in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, and the regional OHCHR office in Dakar. From 2022 to 2023, the funding amounted to approximately USD 294,000 and USD 2.84 million, respectively.

In 2022, Norway started to support the Ethiopian National Human Rights Commission through the disbursement of approximately USD 463,000 annually to the Danish Institute for Human Rights. Additionally, Norway is providing USD 463,000 annually to Justice for All, which aims to promote human rights and strengthen the rule of law across Ethiopia.

4. Peace operations and stabilisation

UN Peace Operations

Norway views support for UN peace operations as a contribution to global peace and security and one of many efforts to ensure a strong UN. Multilateral cooperation and strong international institutions are crucial to Norway's security, economy and prosperity; thus supporting the UN is in Norway's interests.

The largest contributions to peace operations in the last ten years have been the UN missions in Mali (MINUSMA) and South Sudan (UNMISS). Norway's motivation for contributing to MINUSMA is also geopolitical, as instability and the threats of terrorism, transnational crime, irregular migration flows and maritime crime in the Sahel jeopardise European security. Meanwhile, support for UNMISS is closely related to Norway's long-standing involvement in the peace processes in South Sudan.

MINUSMA

Norway has deployed military officers to MINUSMA since its establishment. From 2013 to 2015, it contributed approximately 20 military officers to the UN Information Analysis Unit, the first in a UN context. In 2015, a Norwegian force was deployed to Bamako to construct Camp Bifrost, serving as a base for the Norwegian C-130J Hercules transport aircraft deployed in January 2016 with a detachment of 70 military personnel. Later that same year, Norway initiated a rotation scheme for aircraft capacity, partnering with Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Portugal to provide transport services on six-month rotations. Norway operated Camp Bifrost and contributed to the rotation scheme in 2016, 2019 and 2020–2021. Due to lack of commitment and resources from Norway and its partners, the rotation scheme concluded in 2022 and Camp Bifrost was handed over to the UN. In 2023, Norway is contributing three staff officers to MINUSMA.

The Training for Peace (TfP) Programme

Training for Peace (TfP) is Norway's flagship support programme to the African Union Commission (AUC) and is currently in its twenty-eighth year of existence. Since 2012, Norway has provided funding of approximately USD 12.138 million. TfP contributes to strengthening the capacity of the AUC to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and insecurity in Africa. The main objectives are to support the AUC in enhancing its knowledge of the conflict and security environment on the continent.

Additionally, TfP seeks to contribute to advancing the AUC's comprehensive range of response capacities. The programme is a unique North-South-South Partnership with an international network of partners, including the Institute for Security



**Training for
Peace**

Studies (ISS), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

The TfP's support to the AU is three-fold. First, to generate new knowledge by conducting evidence-based research and analysis drawing on African peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding experience and expertise to inform policy. Second, to provide policy support by facilitating platforms to develop new policies, doctrines and guidelines. Lastly, to contribute to the capacity building of civilian and police personnel in African and AU mediation, observer and peace missions. Since 2016, the TfP has supported the training of 972 personnel.

Norway also contributed a specialised police team of five officers from 2019 to 2022. This contribution aimed to build the capacity of the Malian police forces in investigation techniques and use of technical evidence in judicial proceedings.

UNMISS

Norway has contributed approximately 15 military staff officers and observers since the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established in 2011. They are responsible for personnel, operations, planning, training and military information. Additionally, 20 Norwegian police officers are deployed to the mission. The police contribution has been to build capacity in the local police force. Almost half of all Norwegian military and police officers deployed to international peace operations over the last decade have been deployed to UNMISS.

Support to training centres/courses

The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana received approximately USD 905,000 in core funding in 2022 and 2023. Additionally, Norway has contributed personnel to UN training programmes through the UN's pre-deployment Selection, Assessment and Assistant Team (SAAT) mechanism. Furthermore, through the Norwegian Defence International Centre (NODEFIC), the Norwegian security forces have also held UN peacekeeping courses, in which several African countries have participated.

Stabilisation and prevention of violent extremism

Norway adopts an integrative approach to stabilisation, counterterrorism and prevention of violent extremism. While recognising the need for a military component, it also places importance on political and dialogue-oriented strategies to address root causes and ensure long-term stability.

Military efforts. Due to the limited size and resources of the Norwegian security forces, Norway's ability to contribute to military operations abroad is restricted. Additionally, the country's budget for development assistance is legally confined to civilian efforts, limiting its capacity to

Secondments via the NORCAP mechanism

Norway places great store on supporting the secondment of civilian personnel to the AU and other peace and security initiatives in Africa via the NORCAP roster of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The roster's high level of technical expertise and solid network base allow for great efficiency. It provides the AU and other peace and security programmes with the capacity to fulfil their mandates and reach their targets.

Furthermore, NORCAP's agreement with the AU ensures African ownership, as all experts seconded are civilian African nationals. Because the Norwegian budget for development assistance allows for flexible funding, the roster is deemed an efficient tool in



**NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL**

fulfilling urgent capacity gaps at the request of the AU. Through the AU-NORCAP agreement, Norway has seconded African experts to the headquarters and AU missions in several African countries. In general, Norway attaches great importance to the partnership with the AU, which is seen as a key peace and security actor in Africa. Thus, supporting institutional capacity through having African experts on the staff is central to ensuring African ownership and, consequently, sustainable peace on the continent. In addition to NORCAP secondments, Norway has allocated funding to the human resource staffing in the Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) department of the AUC.

Peace and security staff seconded by NORCAP and funded by Norway: More than twice as many seconded to the AU and its RECs than to the UN and EU combined

	2021	2022	2023
Organisations within the AU and its RECs			
AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS).....	15	14	15
Ceasefire and Transnational Security Arrangement Monitoring and Verification (CTSAMVM), South Sudan	3	3	3
AU Country offices/missions	1	1	5
Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), South Sudan	1	1	3
AU Commission (AUC), Cabinet of the Deputy Chair	0	0	2
UN Organisations			
UN Stabilization Mission in DR Congo (MONUSCO).....	6	6	6
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).....	0	2	1
UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)	0	0	1
UN Development Programme (UNDP).....	0	0	1
EU Organisations			
The EU Office in Bamako, Mali	1	0	0
Total	27	27	37

Staff seconded by NORCAP, funded by Norway, and working with peace and security in Africa.
Numbers by organisation and year. Source: NORCAP unofficial estimates, September 2023.

Thematic areas	2021	2022	2023
Peace Support / Stabilisation	14	13	7
Policy / Political	4	4	8
Gender/ WPS.....	1	4	6
Coordination /Liaison	1	1	6
Mediation, Dialogue & Reconciliation	2	2	2
Human Rights & Rule of Law.....	1	1	2
Programme Support	1	1	1
Early Warning & Conflict Prevention.....	2	1	0
Security sector reform (SSR) and Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).....	1	0	1
Management.....	0	0	1
Climate, Peace and Security.....	0	0	1
Other	0	0	2
Total	27	27	37

Staff seconded by NORCAP, funded by Norway, and working with peace and security in Africa.
Numbers by thematic area and year. Source: NORCAP unofficial estimates, September 2023.

contribute to military efforts abroad. However, the Norwegian Ministry of Defence has contributed to counterterrorism operations in Africa. For instance, Norway has provided financial support to the International Academy for the Fight Against Terrorism in Côte d'Ivoire. There are ongoing discussions about providing the academy with additional funding and personnel. Furthermore, Norway has deployed personnel and provided financial support to the US-led Flintlock exercise, which aims to increase the capacity of African states in combating the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Norway is also exploring the possibility of backing the Accra Initiative to support African states in deterring the proliferation of terrorism to the coastal states of West Africa.

Civilian efforts. Most of Norway's efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in Africa are closely related to its broader peace-and-reconciliation endeavours. Central to this is support for local dialogue initiatives and the facilitation of dialogue between national authorities and local communities. Additionally, Norway has partnered with several African authorities to address non-military approaches to terrorism and extremism.

The Sahel. Norway supports a Danish-Norwegian peace and stabilisation fund in the Liptako-Gourma area. The fund supports efforts ranging from awareness-raising about (the risks of) violent extremism and also supports security sector reforms, for example towards increased civilian control, at the national level, the establishment of mediation networks and other trust-building mechanisms at the local level. The overall aim is to reduce conflict levels, raise living standards and build community resilience to terrorism and other shocks. Between 2018 and 2021, Norway disbursed approximately USD 3.1 million to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) in support of its efforts in Mali and Nigeria. The fund supports local stakeholders' activities in reintegrating ex-combatants into local communities, improving economic opportunities and access to basic services and preventing radicalisation in prisons.

Somalia. Supporting stability efforts in areas newly recovered from al-Shabab and fostering trust between the federal government and local communities are considered by Norway to be key to assisting the government in establishing a presence and preventing al-Shabab from regaining a foothold. Through substantial funding to the Nordic International Support Foundation, amounting to approximately USD 5.2 million from 2019 to 2022, Norway has supported projects aimed at constructing and rehabilitating economic and community infrastructure, such as solar streetlights, government buildings and roads. Norway further supports efforts to increase the presence of police in local communities and the establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms.

Mozambique. Norway supports efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa. Through the disbursement of approximately USD 4.12 million to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) from 2021 to 2024, Norway contributes to peace clubs for youths, local dialogue initiatives, income-generating activities and the reintegration of ex-combatants. Moreover, Norway has supported the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in establishing a satellite office in Cabo Delgado, as part of a broader effort to build judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute actors of extremism.

5. Climate, peace and security

Norway sees climate change as a key risk to global peace and stability and a driver of conflict. Thus, incorporating a climate component in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is considered pivotal to the achievement of sustainable peace and development.

Norway's efforts to strengthen and advance the climate, peace and security agenda have taken various forms. Central to this has been Norway's support for a research project co-led by NUPI and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) that has produced factsheets to generate knowledge on climate, peace and security risks for specific countries and regions on the

UN Security Agenda. These include factsheets on Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Mali, Central African Republic and the Sahel. The primary objective has been to contribute to knowledge production, in order to better understand the interlinkages between climate, peace and security, and to disseminate information about the impacts of climate change.

Throughout its time on the UN Security Council (2021-2022), Norway worked with the African council members to ensure cross-regional cooperation and support for the climate agenda. In 2022, Norway and Kenya co-chaired the informal expert group of the members of the Security Council on climate and security. Moreover, Norway actively supported a draft thematic resolution on climate and security, co-sponsored by Niger and Ireland in 2021.

Seeing that climate, peace and security is a relatively new agenda in an international context, Norway's support for tangible projects that address challenges on the ground remains limited, with some important exceptions. In Nigeria, the Norwegian embassy is supporting an ongoing pilot project implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and in cooperation with the local authorities in north-west Nigeria. Norway's financial contribution amounts to approximately USD 5.45 million from 2022 to 2025. The project aims to foster resilience against climate-security risks by creating structures to resolve land disputes caused by extreme weather events.

Conclusion


Norway's peace and security commitments in Africa are driven by key priorities that encompass civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution, WPS, civil society and human rights, and climate, peace and security. Peace and reconciliation remain a top priority, due to Norway's historical role as a mediator and dialogue facilitator, founded on the belief that peace processes and dialogue initiatives prevent and mitigate conflict and reduce violence. Central to these efforts is the importance of inclusive peace processes, as determinants of sustaining peace. As such, the inclusion of women and civil society actors and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law are integral to Norway's efforts.

South Sudan, Somalia and Mali are Norway's top-priority African countries within the area of peace and security. In Mali, MINUSMA was, until recently, one of Norway's top priorities; however, due to recent political developments in Mali, Norway is mainly focusing on adherence to and implementation of the peace agreement. In Somalia, Norway is currently advocating for a stronger development component in stabilisation efforts and greater flexibility in international funds to better address on-the-ground needs. In South Sudan, supporting the transition to a civilian government and reducing local conflicts remain key priorities.

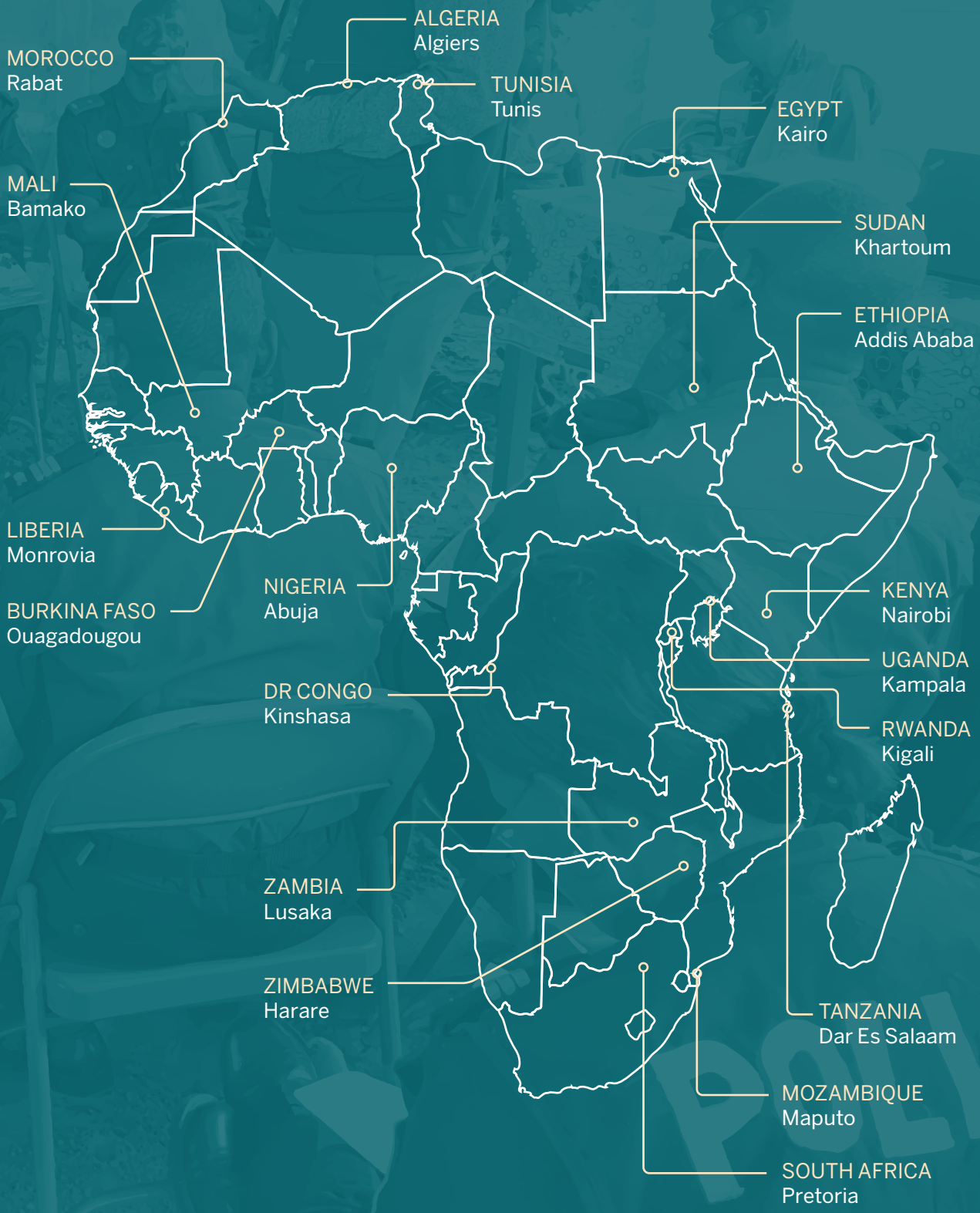
Norway attaches great importance to its partnership with the AU. This commitment is reflected in the establishment in 2018 of a permanent mission to the AU. Through its substantial secondment and capacity-building work, Norway increasingly supports efforts to ensure African ownership and the AU's efforts to address peace and security issues. Ultimately, Norway aims to contribute to making the AU one of the leading peace and security actors in Africa and the world.

Sweden

19 EMBASSIES
IN AFRICA



Kinshasa, DRC, March 2018. Officers from the Congolese National Police receive training on how to prevent the illegal recruitment and use of children by armed groups. This training was held from 14 to 15 March 2018 and was facilitated by the Child Protection Section of MONUSCO, together with among others UNICEF. Promoting the reintegration of children involved in armed groups to return to normal life, through organisations like the UNICEF, is an important part of Sweden's international peace and security cooperation. Photo: Sandra Penan, MONUSCO.



Sweden

Fredrik Söderbaum and Sören Stapel

Sweden has adopted a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to cooperation with Africa in the field of peace and security, which is based on the view that peace, security, development and human rights are closely intertwined. While Swedish cooperation with Africa involves diplomatic instruments and support for peacekeeping and stabilisation missions through the UN and the EU, the Swedish portfolio of international development cooperation extends over many areas of cooperation and a significant number of partner countries and (sub-)regions.

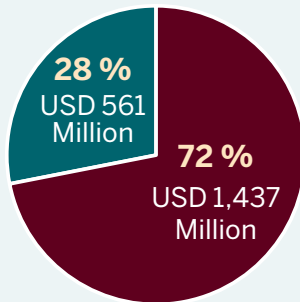
Swedish international development cooperation aims to create the prerequisites for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. According to the Swedish approach, human security constitutes one of the four components of the multidimensional definition of poverty. Furthermore, since 2015, a conflict perspective should be integrated into Sweden's bilateral development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

In terms of partners, Sweden has historically cooperated with many countries in East and Southern Africa, while it has kept a much weaker presence in West and North Africa. Over the last two decades, Sweden has gradually reoriented its focus towards countries affected by conflict and fragility, which has resulted in a greater emphasis on the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. Matters of peace and security are included, in one way or another, in no fewer than 15 of Sweden's country-based development strategies with partners in Africa: in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition to the fairly large number of partner countries, since 2002 Sweden has also pursued a comprehensive regional development cooperation strategy with (sub-Saharan) Africa in which peace and security is one of the main priorities.

As explained in the introduction, the case studies of Nordic countries in this report focus on five themes, mapping these areas in cooperation with partner countries in Africa. The Sweden study follows a similar framework. The five areas do not correspond to any official list of priority areas of the governments of the Nordic countries, they have been used and defined for the purposes of this report and it is important to remember that there is an element of overlap between them. As with other presentations in this report, unless otherwise stated, the Sweden case is based on (quantitative and qualitative) material publicly available on the websites of Sida, FBA, openaid.se and through the data provided by NAI and NUPI. A limited number of interviews have been conducted with relevant representatives from Sida and FBA.

To understand the logic of Swedish cooperation with Africa on peace and security, it is relevant to mention that the government (the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) maintains overall responsibility for policy, political advice and multilateral development cooperation, whereas two development agencies – the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA): Swedish agency for peace, security and development – maintain responsibility for executing Sweden's bilateral development cooperation. Although Sida is far larger, FBA plays a strategic role in peacebuilding and capacity building in Africa.

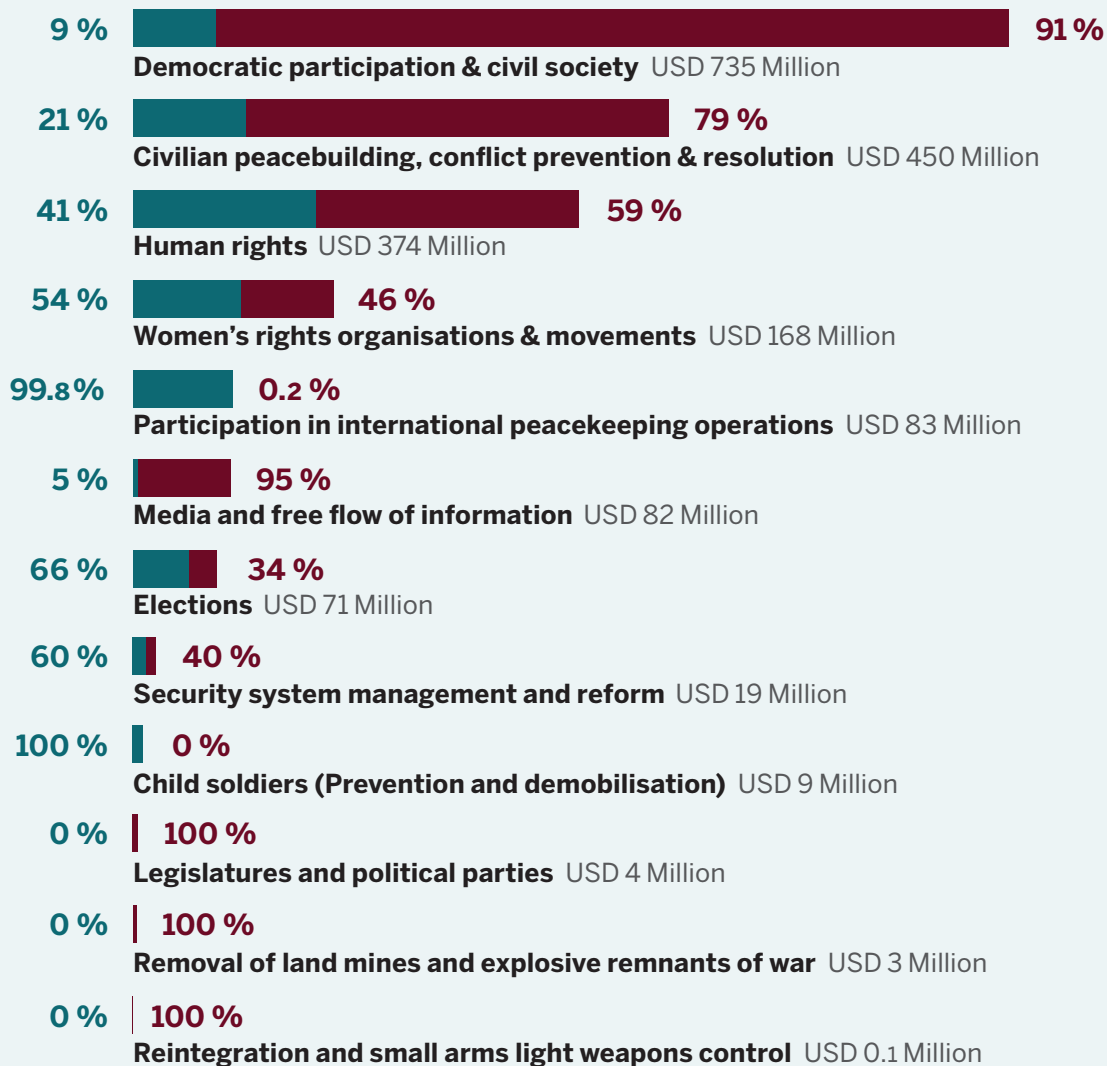
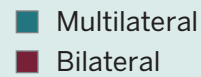
Sweden's peace and security cooperation in Africa: Democratic participation and civil society at the top of the agenda



Sweden's foreign aid to peace and security cooperation with Africa

Official development assistance (ODA), cumulated 2012 to 2021.

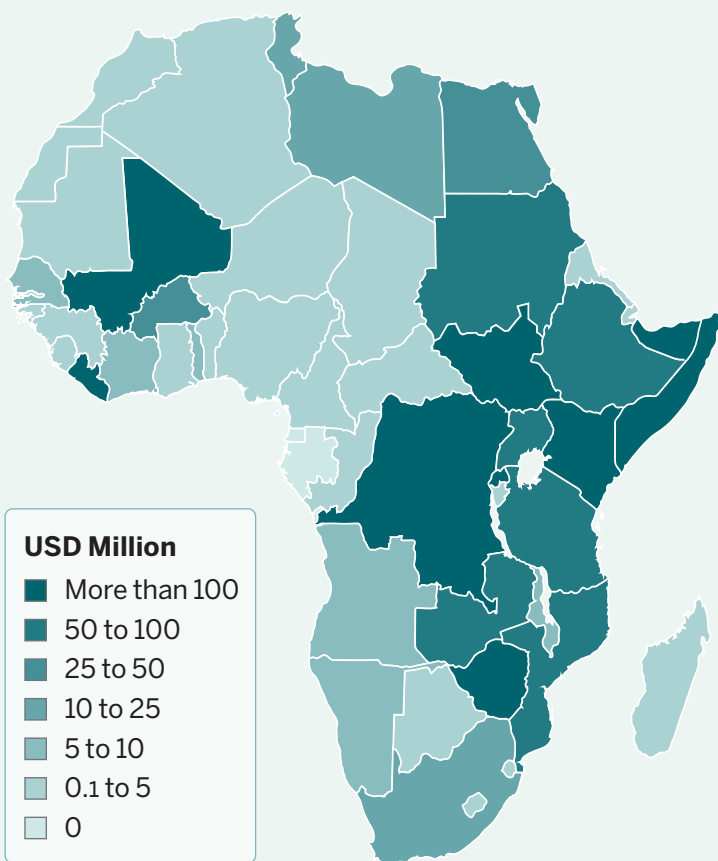
Total USD 1,998 Million
(21 % of Sweden's total ODA to Africa)



1. Mediation, conflict prevention and support for peace processes

‘Peaceful and inclusive societies’ constitute a core priority of Swedish international development cooperation in Africa. Although there are several (other) overlapping sub-categories, ‘democratic participation and civil society’ has been the dominant priority area of peace and security in terms of funding over the period 2012 to 2021, with interventions worth USD 735 million in accumulated official development assistance (ODA), i.e. 37 per cent of Swedish ODA to Africa in the field of peace and security. However, the ODA flows differ from year to year, and if we look at 2021 alone (the last year for which we have comparable data from all Nordic countries), ‘civilian peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution’ was the largest area in terms of funding in this field, with

Sweden's peace and security cooperation with Africa: DRC and Zimbabwe – Sweden's top priority countries



Peace and security as share of Sweden's total ODA per country

TOP 10 In absolute numbers (USD Million)

1.	DR Congo	174	31%
2.	Zimbabwe	135	46%
3.	Mali	129	35%
4.	Rwanda	121	43%
5.	Liberia	120	21%
6.	Kenya	112	15%
7.	South Sudan ...	110	27%
8.	Somalia	108	16%
9.	Mozambique ...	90	15%
10.	Zambia	85	16%

TOP 10 In relative numbers (USD per inhabitant)

1.	Liberia	23.6
2.	South Sudan ...	9.8
3.	Rwanda	9.3
4.	Zimbabwe	9.1
5.	Somalia	6.8
6.	DR Congo	6.6
7.	Mali	6.4
8.	Zambia	4.6
9.	Eswatini	4.2
10.	Namibia	3.8

Sweden's official development assistance to peace and security cooperation in Africa. Cumulated ODA 2012 to 2021, by country. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

interventions worth almost USD 90 million. The most significant individual country partners for Sweden's peace and security cooperation in Africa over the time period 2012 to 2021 were the DRC, Zimbabwe and Mali. If we look at the year 2021 alone, South Sudan, the DRC and Africa as a region were the most significant partners in terms of funding.

South Sudan

One important undertaking in South Sudan is Sweden's support for UNDP's Peace and Community Cohesion Project, which seeks to establish community cohesion and conflict prevention and resolution by establishing local and inter-ethnic peace committees and providing opportunities for people to work together on issues such as finance, trade and culture. Another prominent project is the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund, which aims to reduce violence and increase peaceful coexistence. Swedish support is geared towards family reunification of abducted women and children, preventing forced marriages, and reducing sexual violence and livestock-related conflicts.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the DRC, Sweden supports a wide range of projects with a diverse set of implementing partners. Through UNICEF, Sweden promotes the reintegration of children involved in armed groups, helping them return to normal life. Other interventions strive to build resilience to crises by supporting development organisations working with local civil society partners to implement holistic, inclusive, innovative peacebuilding and conflict transformation initiatives to address the root causes of conflict in the North and South Kivu provinces.

Another prominent example is the Swedish support for International Alert, which relies on dialogue to build inter-ethnic trust and reinforce women's empowerment and political participation. Evidence suggests that community dialogue groups reduce inter-ethnic mistrust, reinforce social cohesion and prevent generalisations or demonisation across borders in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC.

The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA)

FBA is involved in peacebuilding and a range of mediation and dialogue projects in Africa. Its activities are concentrated in four countries – the DRC, Somalia, Liberia and Mali – plus the regional strategy for Africa. Unlike the focus of most other development agencies on resource transfers, FBA's modus operandi is geared towards capacity building, advice and training activities. FBA is also responsible for all secondments of Swedish civilian personnel to peacebuilding, peace operations and election monitoring missions.

For example, FBA's work in the DRC strives to prepare local communities for the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life through trust-building and training. In Somalia, it seeks to contribute to building a security sector capable of controlling the

state territory and ensuring public safety. Its work in Liberia is also geared towards security sector reform, for instance, through two capacity-building programmes targeting key individuals in the local security councils and the National Security Council. The aim is to contribute to improved efficiency, state presence and oversight in rural parts of the country. In Mali, FBA offers training and expert advice for key actors tasked by the Ministry of Reconciliation with preventing and solving local conflicts around the country. The regional programme focuses, among other things, on capacity building and supporting African-led peacekeeping training centres, such as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana.

Regional support for Africa

Sweden has a diverse portfolio of projects directed towards Africa as a region. For instance, one project (now completed) provided core institutional support for the AU's Peace and Security Council. Another intervention seeks to strengthen the mediation capacity of the AU Commission and several other regional organisations that are engaged in mediation and peacebuilding processes, such as in the Great Lakes region, South Sudan and The Gambia. Sweden also works with civil society organisations, such as the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, in order to strengthen capacities on dialogue and mediation among women from various West African countries.

2. Women, peace and security (WPS)

Sweden has a long-standing commitment to gender equality and to the empowerment of women and girls. This was forcefully demonstrated by the establishment of the world's first feminist foreign policy in 2014, emphasising 'the three Rs': women's rights, representation and resources. Gender equality is a human right, but as stipulated in UN Security Council resolution 1325 and the agenda for women, peace and security (WPS), women are critical in all efforts to achieve peace and security.

International efforts on WPS of relevance to Africa

During Sweden's membership of the UNSC in 2017–2018, women's participation, protection against conflict-related sexual violence and integrating gender into peace support operations and peace processes were central priorities. During its tenure, the presence of women civil society briefers, disaggregation of gender statistics in UN reporting and other practices led to noticeable integration of gender issues in the Council's everyday working agenda and its resolutions, which in many cases were directly relevant to Africa.

Even though the current Swedish government discontinued the feminist foreign policy of the previous after the change of government in 2022, gender equality and the rights of girls and women remain priorities for its foreign policy and international development cooperation. Sweden strongly supports the WPS agenda within multilateral institutions, especially in the UN and the EU. Sweden also aspires to strengthen Nordic collaboration within the UN framework, for example, through exchange of information and the Nordic Women Mediators' Network.

Supporting WPS in Africa

Sweden contributes to the WPS agenda through dialogue and international development cooperation. The four pillars of the WPS agenda – participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery – lie at the heart of these efforts. Swedish WPS-related development cooperation with Africa has increased substantially over time, both where gender equality is the primary objective and where gender equality is significant, but not the main objective.

Although Sweden supports WPS in a range of African countries, special attention has been given to four partner countries where country-specific results can be followed up: the DRC, Liberia, Mali and Somalia. The Swedish regional strategy on Africa also includes objectives related to WPS. In several cases, there is coordination between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA).

A range of Swedish contributions and projects are intended to increase women's participation nationally and at the community level. For instance, FBA is engaged with UN Women to support the drafting of Mali's new National Action Plan for WPS. Sida also supports UN Women in strengthening South Sudanese women's rights organisations and organising peace talks throughout the country. In another relevant project, FBA supports the Somali Electoral Commission's intention of achieving the equal participation of women in elections. There are several regional projects, such as FBA's training and expert advice to support the gender mainstreaming efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Supporting WPS in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Sweden has a comprehensive portfolio of projects and programmes related to WPS in the DRC. Most of the interventions contribute to the achievement of goals contained in the Swedish country strategy.

Sida provides non-earmarked programme support to UN Women, considered the most important partner for normative and strategic dialogue with the Ministry of Gender Equality and the government regarding implementing the DRC's action plan for WPS and Resolution 1325. UN Women has been successful in promoting the creation of a gender equality profile for the DRC and for enhancing women's participation in a range

of political processes at various levels, such as national, provincial and local authorities, civil society organisations, women-led groups, research centres, the private sector and UN agencies.

Sida also provides extensive support to Congolese civil society organisations through various Swedish civil society organisations such as Diakonia, Woman to Woman (Kvinna till Kvinna), and the Olof Palme International Center. Several partners also work with survivors of conflict-based sexual violence. The focus is both on support for crime victims and on raising the quality of criminal investigations and trials for sexual violence.

3. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Human rights, democracy and the rule of law pertain to Sweden's comprehensive, multidimensional approach to peace and security in Africa. This priority has a long history and dates back to the support for African liberation and anti-apartheid movements. A rather new development is supporting human rights, democracy and rule of law at the regional level. As illustrated in the opening of this chapter, activities covered under this theme feature prominently in Swedish development cooperation.

Human rights

Sweden cooperates with local civil society and grassroots organisations in a wide range of African countries to monitor human rights violations, build capacity for the prosecution of violations and strengthen human rights activists. Sweden underlines support for the most marginalised and discriminated people in African societies, especially women, young people and minorities – groups that are frequently excluded from power and public institutions.

Freedom of expression and a free press are viewed as essential for the promotion of human rights and sustainable peace. In the DRC, Kenya and Zimbabwe, Sida supports projects for training journalists and promoting investigative journalism – for instance, human rights reporting. Sweden is working with the Tanzanian NGO JamiiForums to set up an impartial, data-driven and real-time platform for election-related stories. The Swedish approach also entails building and strengthening peace through radio programmes in Liberia and Rwanda.

At the regional level, Sweden supports a variety of African normative frameworks for human rights and seeks to improve their implementation and compliance. Through the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, it assists with access to justice and implementation of regional human rights commitments, for instance through online information for national human rights institutions at the AU level and by strengthening the East African Community (EAC) Court of Justice.

Democratic participation and elections

Sweden promotes democratic institutions and fair elections across Africa to achieve more just, equitable and peaceful governance. On the one hand, this means enhancing the participation of broader society in democratic governance. For instance, Sida and the Swedish Centre Party

International Foundation have initiated a project to empower women in politics in Kenya, Uganda, Togo and Burkina Faso. On the other hand, Sweden promotes responsiveness, accountability and transparency across the electoral cycle. To this end, it frequently participates in international observation missions for elections across all levels of government. FBA is responsible for recruiting, training and seconding Swedish personnel to such missions.

Regionally, Sweden works with the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa on election observation missions, election management bodies, and post-election follow-up missions of ECOWAS and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Another example is the support for the West African Democracy Solidarity Network in mobilising, coordinating and leveraging the collective power of pro-democracy forces within the sub-region.

Rule of law and fight against corruption

From the Swedish perspective, a functioning judicial system is essential to maintaining the rule of law. In Kenya, Sweden supports key institutions in implementing the Sustaining Judiciary Transformation blueprint and broader criminal justice reforms. In Burkina Faso, Sweden has teamed up with UNDP to address weaknesses of the judicial sector in a highly volatile security context.

Sweden has also designed programmes to combat corruption and to improve the accountability of public institutions. In Liberia, Sierra Leone and Zambia, public-sector corruption weakens the rule of law and undermines citizen participation in democratic governance processes. Supporting the fight against corruption, Sweden seeks to increase confidence in public institutions and the overall resilience of societies – two things that are considered indispensable for sustainable peace. Sweden partners with local chapters of Transparency International and national anti-corruption commissions in Burkina Faso and Liberia.

4. Peace operations and stabilisation

In its contributions to peacekeeping and peace operations, Sweden relies on the Swedish Armed Forces, the Swedish Police Authority and the secondment of civilian personnel to peace operations. These political, military and police deployments and their related activities are frequently complemented by a range of traditional international development cooperation projects.

UN peace operations in Africa with Swedish contributions

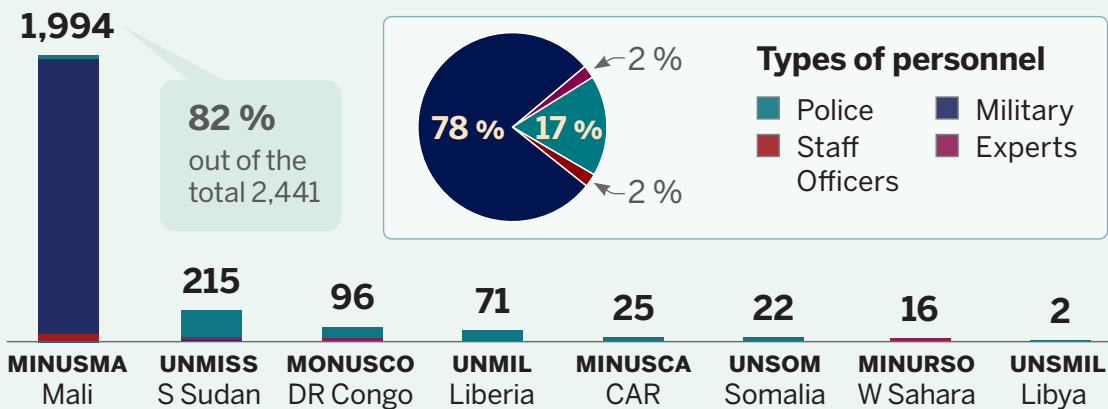
Sweden is an unequivocal supporter of UN peacekeeping and peace operations in Africa. In its activities, the country focuses primarily on the civilian side of the missions, and its personnel are usually not authorised to engage in military combat. The main exception to this involved the relatively large Swedish military contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (see figure to the right). Following the discontinuation of Swedish military support to MINUSMA in 2023, the Swedish Armed Forces are currently only represented in Western Sahara through two military observers within the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

As part of the civilian components of UN-led missions through its secondment of experts from FBA, the Swedish Police Authority and other government agencies, Sweden contributes to protecting civilians (particularly women and children), monitoring and investigating human rights violations, and other humanitarian efforts. Sweden also provides strategic advice to governments to promote the rule of law, accountable and rights-based police services and justice system reforms, for instance, as part of its contributions to the UN missions in Africa.

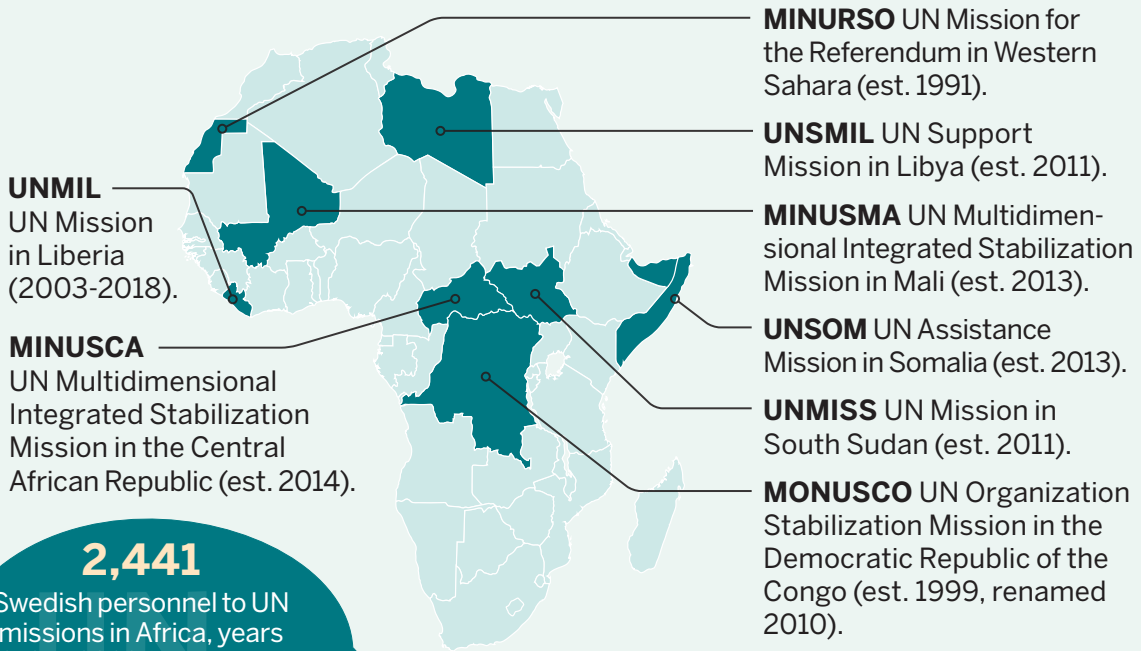
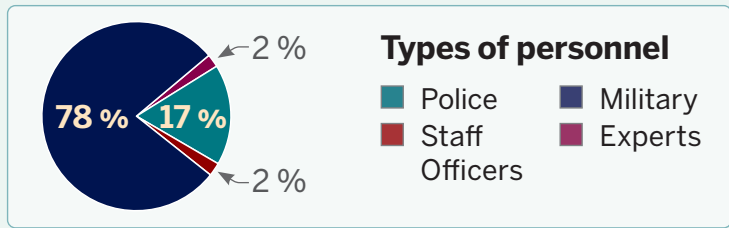
EU missions in Africa with Swedish contributions

Sweden also fulfils its commitments under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and frequently participates in military and civilian missions in Africa. As early as 2003, Sweden contributed to Operation Artemis, which was the EU's first military operation outside Europe. It also contributed five units to Operation Atalanta, the EU's naval effort to fight piracy

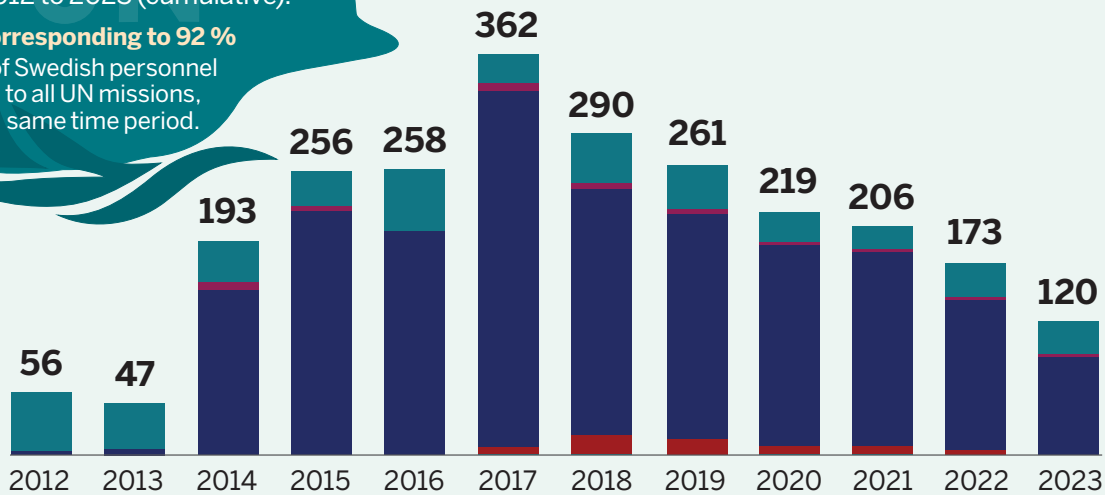
Swedish personnel to UN missions in Africa 2012-2023: More than 8 out of 10 go to Mali



Cumulative numbers of Swedish personnel to UN Missions in Africa 2012-2023.



2,441
Swedish personnel to UN missions in Africa, years 2012 to 2023 (cumulative).
Corresponding to 92 % of Swedish personnel to all UN missions, same time period.



Swedish personnel to UN missions in Africa. Source: UN Peacekeeping online database on troop and police contributors (data retrieved in August 2023).

in the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia. In 2022, Sweden's backing for EU civilian and military missions in Africa entailed the deployment of support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy (3 persons), Swedish Prison and Probation Services (1), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (11), the Swedish Police Authority (2) and the Swedish Armed Forces (9) to the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Somalia.

Currently, Sweden contributes to a range of military missions of the EU's CSDP. The main task of the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia lies in capacity building in the field of defence and security, primarily with the Somali Ministry of Defence and the Somali Armed Forces. The Swedish Armed Forces contribute personnel. Moreover, Sweden contributes to similar training missions led by the EU, providing strategic advice and support to command-and-control functions and training military forces at soldier, group and platoon levels (EUTM Mali, EUTM Central African Republic).

Regarding the civilian CSDP missions, Sweden supports the advisory mission (EUAM) in the Central African Republic, the capacity-building missions (EUCAP) in Mali, Niger and Somalia, as well as the border assistance programmes in Libya (EUBAM). Sweden sends experts from the various Swedish agencies, most notably FBA, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service and the Swedish Police Authority. The focus lies on security sector reform and improving capacity regarding human rights, the rule of law and access to justice.

Swedish support to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) 2014–2023

The Swedish engagement in MINUSMA was the first substantial military contribution to a UN-led peace operation since the mid-1990s. MINUSMA was one of the largest multidimensional stabilisation missions in Africa, and Sweden was also one of the major troop contributors. Until the Swedish engagement was discontinued in April 2023, the Swedish Armed Forces had deployed about 1,900 military personnel to various parts of the mission, including a substantive number of women combatants.

Initially, the Swedish contribution consisted of air and logistical support. Subsequently, it changed to support for the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) task force in charge of protecting civilians and force protection, which was the first of its kind for Sweden in a UN-led operation. After Sweden was heavily involved in developing the new Force Adaptation Plan for MINUSMA through Lieutenant General Gyllensporre, Force Commander 2018-2021,

the Swedish contribution changed once again, to an artillery company. The plan envisioned the transformation and relocation of several units and the establishment of a mobile task force, which entailed rapidly deployable units, helicopter units and ISR assets across all sectors to anticipate and rapidly mobilise in response to incidents in areas of operation. These arrangements established a new level of combat readiness in a UN peacekeeping operation.

In line with its comprehensive approach, Sweden also provides Mali and the wider region with bilateral support and humanitarian aid, alongside the military contributions to MINUSMA. Sida has a comprehensive portfolio of projects on human rights and democracy promotion, while FBA works with the Malian government on political dialogue, mediation, security sector reform, and to enhance the role of women in the peace process.

5. Climate, peace and security

Sweden increasingly acknowledges the complex interconnections between violent conflicts and climate change. Climate change represents a significant risk to peace and security that interacts with, and is compounded by, societal, economic and political factors. Therefore, an environmental and climate perspective has been systematically integrated into Sweden's cooperation with Africa. Focus areas include the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

The climate change-migration-conflict nexus in Africa

Sweden underlines the connection between climate change and conflict on the one hand, and 'irregular and involuntary' migration on the other. For example, it cooperates with Saferworld to address conflict drivers in Uganda, particularly noting the connection between the depletion of natural resources and refugee influxes that contribute to civil unrest. Such projects seek to contribute to local capacity to prevent and reduce vulnerability to conflict in connection with natural resources and climate change. As migration continues to increase in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, Sweden has worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to assist vulnerable Ethiopian migrants in Djibouti, Yemen, Somalia and Tanzania through an emergency response initiative.

Climate change, deteriorating livelihoods and food security

The climate change-conflict nexus relates to the triple threats of drought, desertification and underdevelopment. Sweden has designed projects to build up the resilience of the most vulnerable households, especially those headed by women, in the most food-insecure contexts, including Burkina Faso and South Sudan. In Somalia, Sweden promotes resilience based on a project facilitating an integrated approach to water, environment and disaster risk reduction.

Sweden is investing heavily in measures aimed at climate adaptation and resilience. Activities seek to reduce vulnerability, increase resistance to climate change and ensure disaster risk reduction (DRR). It especially backs the capacity of regional actors. By supporting UNDP's Africa Resilience Hub and DRR programmes, Sweden is building the capacity of regional organisations in the Sahel, including ECOWAS, the Regional Climate Centre of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, to mitigate the climate change vulnerability of people and societies. Sweden is also assisting the Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in order to create an integrated approach to human security in the Horn of Africa. At the continental level, the environmental security approach results in support for the African Climate Policy Centre to deliver climate-resilient development policies in Africa.

Conclusion

Sweden has adopted a comprehensive approach to cooperation with Africa in the field of peace and security, which is based on the symbiotic relationship between security and development – or rather, poverty and conflict. Swedish development cooperation focuses on 'poor people', which explains the strong emphasis on human security, (human) rights, the rule of law and the conditions conducive to peace both before and after violent conflict.

Sweden cooperates with a diverse set of state and non-state actors in Africa in the field of peace and security. Over the last decade, Sweden's international development cooperation has increasingly been directed towards fragile and conflict-ridden countries in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. This geographical reorientation has led to an increased emphasis on civilian peacebuilding, mediation and conflict prevention, human rights and democracy promotion.


In contrast to Sweden's powerful rhetorical commitment to UN and EU peace operations, the resources and the number of seconded staff remain rather limited, to some extent even symbolic.

The main exception to Sweden's weak presence on the ground is MINUSMA, to which Sweden contributed a total of almost 2,000 personnel over the last decade.

Swedish cooperation with Africa in peace and security is uncertain for at least three reasons. First, Swedish funding for peace and security in Africa is likely to continue to decline, due to more resources being devoted to the war in Ukraine and the rebuilding of that country, climate change, and migration. Second, working in fragile states and conflict-ridden contexts is both difficult and costly. The comprehensive and multidimensional Swedish approach to peace and security in Africa faces several challenges and weaknesses. In particular, Sweden needs to reduce portfolio fragmentation and improve its coherence and consistency as an actor. Third, Swedish cooperation with African states and regions continues to centre on official development assistance, and is sometimes detached from local needs and challenges. In response, Sweden needs to become more adaptive to local contexts and increase its ability to promote African agency and bring about a more equal partnership.

Part 2

Thematic perspectives



Mogadishu, Somalia, July 2021. Officers of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army (SNA) attend a joint training on civil-military cooperation in peace support operations. Photo: Yunis Dekow, AMISOM.

African peace support capacity

Vasu Gounden

Beginning in the early 1990s, geopolitical developments, new conflict patterns, and an evolution in the practice of conflict resolution by Africa's intergovernmental, state and non-governmental actors heralded new African efforts in the field of peacemaking and peacekeeping, leading to Nordic collaboration in training and capacity building in these areas. The last decade has witnessed cooperation between the Nordic region and Africa to address increasingly complex civil conflicts, through mediation and peacekeeping.

A geopolitical shift in the aftermath of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a unipolar global order dominated by the United States. It also coincided with an era characterised by political shifts in Africa and elsewhere, from one-party states to multi-party democracy. These shifts led to the birth of competitive politics in many countries across Africa. And in many instances – such as in Somalia, the DRC and Burundi – competitive politics led to conflicts that ranged from civil protest to civil war, and that required mediation and peacekeeping.

Although mediation is an age-old practice, the sudden proliferation of civil conflict called for the rapid development of conflict management skills, systems and structures. South Africa and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), established in 1992, developed a praxis of conflict resolution from two well-developed strands in the United States – labour-management relations, dominated by the legal profession; and community relations, led by community activists and social scientists. As conflict resolution expanded and conflicts became more complex, involving both soft and hard security issues, a third strand was added that borrowed from the field of security and strategic studies. ACCORD's expertise thus developed into a combination of labour dispute resolution and community relations; this was then tested during the efforts to bring about a resolution to the violent civil conflicts that characterised the South African political landscape in the early 1990s.

In this same period, the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – the precursor to the African Union (AU) – were in the early stages of evolving mechanisms to deal with the rise in civil conflicts. ACCORD began interacting with and supporting the OAU in 1993, as the continental body was developing its fledgling Conflict Management Centre, the forerunner of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

It was during the debate on peacekeeping operations in the fourth committee of the UN General Assembly in 1994 that a new idea was born. African countries were adamant in their view that they could take on a more active role in resolving African conflicts. South African President Nelson Mandela brought this up at a meeting with former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland in March 1995, and suggested that South Africa and Norway could consider some kind of cooperation in this context.

Against this background, Nordic support for mediation and peacekeeping commenced in 1996 with support from the Government of Norway to ACCORD, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) to establish the

Training for Peace (TfP) project, prophetically named for what it was later to evolve into. At the time of its establishment, it was conceived as a training programme within a changing peacekeeping context, with a shift from traditional, inter-positional peacekeeping related to inter-state war to peacekeeping within a civil conflict, where civilians are both victims and protagonists. Adapting to these new demands thus required the development of doctrine, skills among peacekeepers, documentation of experiences, best practice, and the creation of fresh and innovative knowledge. The reconceptualisation and expansion of the concept of traditional peacekeeping, to include the civilian dimension, was the *raison d'être* of the TfP programme.

The OAU, and later the AU, also needed to facilitate the end of civil conflict peacefully, through facilitation, negotiation and mediation. The well-established doctrine of subsidiarity meant that resolving disputes should be devolved to the sub-regional level and become the responsibility of the continent's regional economic communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs). They, too, needed to evolve doctrine, develop skills, and establish early-warning and mediation mechanisms.

It was in response to these needs of the AU, the RECs and the RMs that the governments of Sweden and Finland provided – and continue to provide – support for ACCORD and other conflict management organisations to work with the AU, RECs and RMs in order to develop their capacity for the establishment of mediation support units and prepare a cadre of mediators and mediation support staff to respond to increasing civil conflicts. Sweden's relationship with conflict management organisations spans over 25 years, and Finland's over 15 years.

Ultimately, the TfP programme also evolved from a peacekeeping training project into a peace support programme, strengthening the AU Commission's capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflict on the continent by deploying effective full-spectrum peace operations. As the UN's conflict management mechanisms, the APSA and the conflict management mechanisms of the RECs and RMs evolve, it is fair to say that Nordic support has played – and continues to play – a crucial role in shaping the peace and security agenda in Africa and globally.

Today, Africa is at an inflection point: its economies have yet to transform to meet the demands of an exponentially growing population that is rapidly urbanising into unplanned cities; and those same economies are not generating enough jobs, so there is increasing poverty and inequality. These challenges are fuelling social and political protest, and an increase in radicalised insurgencies and criminal syndicates. In addition, rapid technological change and global interconnectivity have seen hybrid military and non-military covert and overt threats – ranging from the weaponisation of social media to the use of private military companies – increase in speed, scale and intensity in Africa.

If it is to respond to these new threats to stability in Africa, and the consequent impact on Europe, the Nordic partnership with Africa must evaluate the nature, extent and form of cooperation. The Nordic states should determine how their previous three decades of valuable assistance to Africa can be continued and how they can engage effectively in a more complex environment. In this context, the lessons of the past will ultimately shape the strategic approach of Africa and her Nordic partners to the future.

Women, peace and security

Olivia Ebenstål Almeida

Nordic cooperation with Africa in the area of peace and security is characterised by a strong emphasis on inclusive peace processes, in which support for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has been a focus area in past development cooperation strategies. African initiatives have played a crucial role in leading the way, and Nordic approaches have been responsive to innovations on the continent. For example, FemWise-Africa, a network of African women in conflict prevention and mediation, operating as a subsidiary mechanism of the African Union's Panel of the Wise, was a forerunner of women's mediation networks worldwide. Cooperation and dialogue between Nordic and African policymakers and civil society activists have facilitated the further creation of women's mediation networks in all the Nordic countries, as well as a Nordic-wide network. Nordic countries have also created innovations. The Barbershop Toolbox, created in Iceland in 2016, has achieved international recognition for its success in involving men in the advancement of gender equality. This model facilitates the establishment of secure environments where men can engage in discussions regarding male attitudes, behaviours, and their contribution to achieving gender equality and eradicating violence. The Nordic countries have also been champions of WPS during their non-permanent memberships of the UN Security Council. Norway (in the Council in 2001–2002 and 2021–2022) and Sweden (2017–2018) have taken different approaches, evolving with and trying to amplify and accelerate the integration of gender into reporting on UN peace support operations, prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, the inclusion of women from civil society in briefings to the Council, and a wide variety of strategic efforts behind resolutions for WPS, special briefings and sessions, and informal and formal mechanisms. Since the Council's working programme inevitably addresses conflicts in Africa, the integration of WPS at this level is expected to shape the UN's own peace and security agenda in Africa.

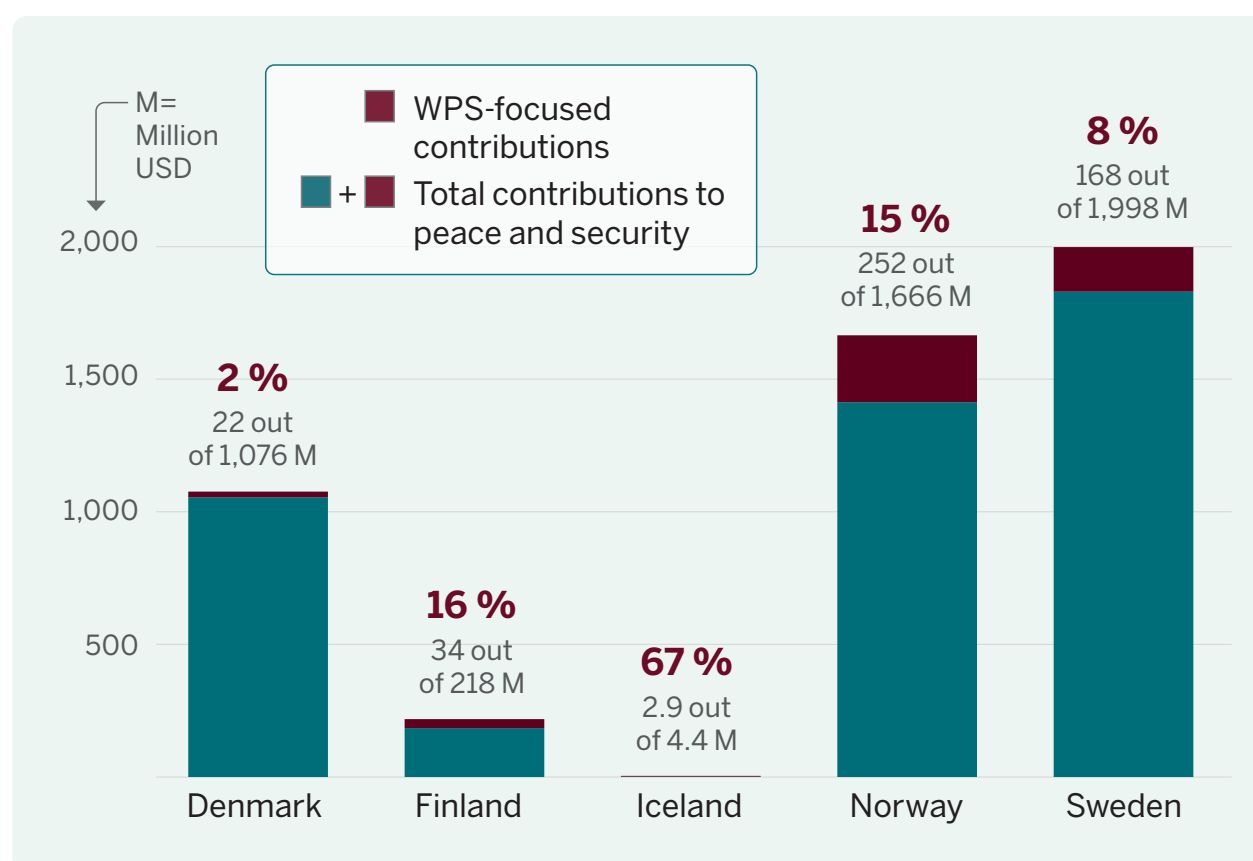
Nordic initiatives channel support for WPS bilaterally, through support to national action plans, Nordic-based international non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations that partner with African organisations in conflict-affected countries, and to a great extent multilaterally, through the UN family of agencies – in particular UN Women. The Nordic states have also been forward-thinking and integrated with cooperation with African actors. For example, Norway supports the AU Special Envoy on WPS with earmarked funding through the framework agreement between the AU, and is providing support to strengthen FemWise-Africa.

Based on OECD/DAC reporting for commitments to women's equality organisations and institutions, between 2012 and 2021, the Nordic countries committed USD 479 million to WPS-focused activities; this represents 10 per cent of the total Nordic development cooperation funds for peace and security in Africa. Financing the WPS agenda means investments in gender equality and women's political and economic empowerment; women's participation in peace processes; and addressing gender-based violence. Iceland stands out as the Nordic country with the highest share (67 per cent) of its funds allocated to WPS-focused activities during this period. The largest

contributor by total amount was Norway, with USD 252 million in committed funds (i.e. 15 per cent of its total funds earmarked for peace and security in Africa). While this data represents the monetary value of contributions earmarked for WPS, as categorised by DAC, other efforts have been undertaken by the Nordic countries, such as dialogue and lobbying, with gender equality serving as a key foreign policy goal (see Nordic country studies).

Overall, the Nordic countries take a multi-sectorial approach to the four pillars of the WPS agenda in Africa – participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery – and focus more broadly on gender equality and women’s empowerment, with a greater emphasis on participation, such as increased access to decision-making, public services, income-generating activities and democratic participation. The contributions are mostly committed to Nordic-country-based NGOs (USD 173 million) and channelled multilaterally through the UN (USD 165 million), for which most of the funds are disbursed by UN Women. The latter contributions mostly consist of unearmarked funding in support of national action plans that facilitate the implementation of the WPS agenda.

According to OECD/DAC, close to 70 per cent of Iceland’s funds, and more than 60 per cent of Finland’s, are delivered through UN Women, with priority given to countries in East and Southern Africa, in which Mozambique and Kenya received the largest sums. The Nordic-based non-governmental organisations Kvinno (Denmark), Care (Norway) and Kvinna till Kvinna (Sweden) serve as key implementers for WPS-directed funds, with priority given to Central, West and North Africa. Unlike Finland and Iceland, however, Denmark, Norway and Sweden engage more with regional cooperation on gender and women’s rights, with commitments of USD 50 million to regional programming.



The Nordic countries' WPS-focused contributions as shares of their total contributions to peace and security in Africa. Cumulated ODA 2012-2021. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Youth, peace and security

Martha Kiiza Bakwesegha

The UN Security Council's Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, set out in its 2015 resolution 2250, and further resolutions 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020), has gained traction over the years, marking a shift in understanding the role of young people in peace and security in Africa. Youth, estimated to constitute about 60 per cent of the continent's population aged below 25, are potentially among the first targets for violent radicalisation and recruitment into armed conflict. Instability in Africa over the years – such as the demonstrations following Kenya's disputed elections in 2007 and 2017; Uganda's pre-election protests in November 2020; the Sudan revolution in 2019; and the Arab Spring beginning in 2011 – is often explained as being linked to large youth populations. According to the YPS agenda, youth are defined as people who are aged between 18 and 29. A precursor to the Council's youth resolutions is the African Union's (AU) Youth Charter of 2006, which placed importance on enabling youth to take up their role as active agents in decision-making and governance. Both the UN and the AU have established that youth participation in preventing and resolving disputes is essential for building sustainable peace. This participation cannot be limited to cosmetic inclusion, but refers to meaningful inclusion in development and policy discussions and implementation. The AU Charter recognises the youth as the African continent's greatest resource.

Nordic youth, peace and security programming in Africa

The Nordic involvement in peace and security interventions in Africa dates back to the 1960s and has spawned multiple initiatives across different countries. In the last decades, the Nordic countries have collaborated with, and provided support for, an array of actors working with African youth in the thematic area of peace and security. Examples of key peacebuilding initiatives include Norway's Training for Peace (TfP) programme; and Denmark's Africa Programme for Peace (APP), through its Peace and Stabilisation Programme for the Horn of Africa. Finland's multiple initiatives include a pilot programme that recognises the contribution of young people across the conflict spectrum and in peace processes. Sweden's support for non-governmental local peacebuilding in Africa includes youth-inclusive initiatives by the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), a Swedish, international peacebuilding organisation that works in partnership with civil society in non-violent conflict transformation.

The Peacefinders project, a pilot initiative by LPI, is an interesting example of advancing Nordic-Africa youth engagement. The project's objectives included fostering shared knowledge and awareness of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and providing a platform for meaningful youth-led engagement. It facilitated knowledge sharing between the youth from different cities in Sweden with one another, and then between Swedish and Kenyan youth, in order to draw lessons from different contexts about young people and the drivers towards peaceful societies.

Furthermore, because of its locally led work, on the ground in the Horn of Africa, LPI can continue to work in spaces that connect with key Kenyan community leaders, through local partners in Nairobi, Mandera and Wajir counties. This is just one example of how Swedish support has been critical, since LPI has thus established sustained dialogue mechanisms in these communities, benefiting Swedish and Kenyan policy objectives. The organisation has engaged across ethnic and religious divides with young people who favour finding alternatives to crime and violence. This work with young people in the LPI network comes at a critical time, owing to the volatile political climate in Kenya over contested elections, and the necessary long-term need to consolidate youth-inclusive peace.

Toward effective YPS programming

Youth, peace and security cooperation interventions, however, can fail. Research and experience show that programmes that inadequately address the short- and long-term causes of conflict and insecurity – specifically how long-term political marginalisation and economic privation interact to drive youth into violent action – can miss the mark of helping young people build peace. For example, it is not always evident that conditions of underdevelopment necessarily generate conflict and insecurity. Cooperation on YPS also needs to distinguish between ‘structured’ and ‘unstructured’ causes of youth perpetration of violence. Structured causes typically relate to long-term grievances (ideology, identity or economic factors), and what may seem like a sporadic violent youth reaction triggered by a contested election (Kenya) or the arrest of a youthful opposition politician (Uganda, Senegal) can, on closer scrutiny, reflect deeper issues regarding structural deficits of weak state accountability to the citizenry. Finally, the interplay between youth agency and legal and psycho-social factors can complicate efforts to develop uniform programming. Within the Acholi community of northern Uganda, for instance, several mothers whose children had been abducted and forcibly conscripted by the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army were deeply traumatised by and opposed to the idea that such children would be subjected to penal justice after they returned to their families and were reintegrated into their communities.

Young people have the wisdom and commitment to pivot African societies towards sustainable peace and security. However, systematic exclusion and structural barriers to youth engagement remain a reality. Nordic-Africa cooperation on YPS should integrate these considerations into its planning, implementation and evaluation, towards supporting the empowerment of youth as agents of change for lasting peace in Africa.

Peacekeeping and countering violent extremism

Fiifi Edu-Afful and Kwesi Aning

Over the past six decades, the Nordic countries have built a solid bilateral relationship with many African nations. Africa remains a major strategic partner, and Nordic states are noted for a historic commitment and loyalty to the UN, not least in terms of participation in UN peace operations. All the Nordic states have demonstrated values that favour civilian, humanitarian and diplomatic conflict resolution over coercive and armed efforts. These values, in recent times, seem at odds with the expansion of UN peace operations that authorise more forceful operations and that have become increasingly militarised. While the Nordic approach has involved different non-coercive policies and collaboration with local stakeholders, the Nordic states have had to adapt to changing UN norms, whether or not they are in tune with national values.

Looking back, the Nordic countries enlarged their security engagements with Africa by focusing heavily on peacekeeping and peacebuilding through various channels, including training, research, policy development and advocacy at both the bilateral and the multilateral level. They combined research and training as the basis for policy development and new knowledge products, towards understanding the dynamics of peacekeeping and violent extremism. The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) has, together with 40 partners from across the globe, established the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON), enabling and supporting collaborative research. Through its studies on for example the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S), the network has created a comprehensive resource on peace operations and their effectiveness in dealing with violent extremism. Likewise, through its initiatives to enhance the operationalisation of the WPS agenda in Africa, the Swedish government, under the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), funded the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KA IPTC) to conduct research, generate knowledge and enhance the skills of practitioners to prevent radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel. Through the CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, Finland contributed to developing and training more than 250 stakeholders on mediation in West Africa from 2011 to 2013.

The Nordic countries have also provided specialised needs-based training courses for actors and institutions dealing with violent extremism in peacekeeping environments. The Training for Peace (TFP) programme continues to provide military, police and civilian training across the African continent. Still, peacekeeping operations are struggling to address terrorism and violent extremism more aggressively in countries where the threat landscape presents complex challenges to various actors – from the UN system to member states, and to national and local partners. For many African countries that are either playing hosts to peacekeeping operations or serving as troop/police contributors, there are many issues begging for attention, for example to improve

the framing of mandated tasks; to bridge the gap between the implications for the principle of impartiality and the consequences of having personnel on field operations; to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and; to develop the appropriate policy and clear mission guidelines to deal with terrorist groups.

In this context, the Nordic countries support the work of more than 45,000 African peacekeepers serving with the UN in Africa and AU-led peace support operations. Finland has provided capacity-building support to AU member states through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) programme, which includes support for preventing and countering violent extremism. In Mali and the Sahel, for instance, the Nordic countries have contributed to promoting peace and security in the region by supporting MINUSMA. The Swedish armed forces between 2015 and 2022 provided an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance task force to support MINUSMA in protecting civilians, preventing violence and promoting security and stability in Mali and its surrounding countries. The Nordic countries have participated in multilateral initiatives to address violent extremism in Africa. Denmark contributed to the Global Counterterrorism Forum, a multilateral platform for cooperation on preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Norway participated in the Sahel Alliance, a multilateral initiative focused on addressing security and development challenges in the Sahel region. The Nordic countries have also supported community-based prevention efforts through various projects in Africa. Norway funded community-led efforts to prevent violent extremism in Kenya through the Action Against Violent Extremism programme. Similarly, Denmark supported community-based prevention efforts in Nigeria through the civil society-led Action Against Radicalization and Violent Extremism project. Many scholars, for example development economist Hilmar Hilmarsson, who has studied how international policies are shaped by the interaction between small and large states, have pointed out that the EU policy towards Africa results from a strong Nordic influence (Hilmarsson 2023).

The quality of the Nordic countries' relationship with Africa could be seen in the contribution to shaping APSA. The Nordic countries supported the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), established in 2007 to help stabilise Somalia and combat the extremist group al-Shabaab. As of 2023, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have provided financial and material support to AMISOM. The model of engagement has seen collaboration that advances healthy civil-military relations, and strengthens civilian and military peacekeeping capabilities and respect for human rights. Demonstrations of long-term commitment, transfer of knowledge, local ownership and leadership, and flexibility are features of the Nordic approach, a slightly broader model than more narrowly militaristic tendencies by other international actors.

Overall, though the Nordic countries have taken a multifaceted approach, driven by humanitarian interests, to addressing violent extremism, the political developments in Mali and the problems facing the Sahel require a shift and accelerated efforts to support a broader range of actors and approaches, from a state-centric to a wider societal approach. The imminent exit of MINUSMA will have an impact on the activities of Nordic countries in the Sahel, especially on priority areas that target the root causes of violent extremism and on prevention initiatives on the ground. For this reason, a shift in strategy is necessary, towards a demand-driven and people-centred stabilisation strategy that addresses the problem at its roots. An integrated, adaptive, agile and sustained approach that tackles the challenges associated with social, economic, political, developmental and humanitarian needs in the Sahel is the surest way of finding a solution to the complex situation in peacekeeping missions that are grappling with violent extremism and terrorism.

The African Union partnership and the Peace Fund

Hafsa Maalim

The revitalisation of the African Union (AU) Peace Fund in 2016 was monumental in moving the continental body closer to consolidating agency in peace and security. The Fund was revitalised within a broader context of reforms seeking to move the institution closer to financial independence. As outlined in the 2016 High Representative's report *Securing predictable and sustainable financing for peace in Africa*, the Peace Fund covers three main windows: 1) mediation and preventive diplomacy; 2) institutional capacity; and 3) peace support operations that include AU liaison offices. A fourth crucial window, the Crisis Reserve Facility (CRF), was also established to provide an agile funding mechanism that can absorb partner funding. Since the revitalisation of the fund, significant steps have been taken to operationalise it fully.

The AU high-level ministerial meeting in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, concluded with a first-ever, historic commitment. The AU allocated USD 5 million to the CRF to support the deployment of the East Africa Regional Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the African Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and the Sudan mediation process. Despite the progress on the political front, technical challenges – such as buy-in from member states on the current scale of assessment and the process of replenishing the AU Peace Fund – have slowed progress in realising its full potential.

Given this context, more room for direct partner engagement and support for the AU Peace Fund is necessary. The Fund has yet to receive partner funding, and has had no direct financial contributions thus far. The USD 322 million collected is from AU member state-assessed and direct voluntary contributions and interest generated through low-risk investments. However, accelerated progress can be achieved with financial, technical and strategic support from partners, including the Nordic countries.

The Nordic support for the AU Peace Fund can be viewed through broader indirect support in delivering the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The APSA continental framework lays the foundation for collective regional and subregional prevention, response, management and resolution to peace and security challenges in Africa. It is anchored in five institutional pillars: the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Peace Fund.

The Nordic countries contribute through bilateral financial support and the Joint Financing Arrangement, a pool of donor funding established to support the operationalisation of APSA by paying the salaries of technical staff and funding the programmatic aspects of APSA at both the AU and the regional economic communities (RECs) level. Additional technical support is provided through affiliated institutions, such as the Training for Peace (TfP) programme; NORCAP, the Norwegian Refugee Council's deployment roster of experts; and Finland's Crisis Management

Initiative (CMI) – Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation. The importance of technical support cannot be overstated, as the department responsible for delivering APSA – the Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) at the AU’s Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – is significantly short-staffed and depends on the technical expertise of personnel deployed from these institutions.

Another way of assessing Nordic support is by evaluating direct and indirect contributions to mediation and preventive diplomacy, institutional capacity and peace support operations, which are aligned to the Peace Fund’s own windows. Through technical and financial support, the Nordic countries have contributed to the AU’s mediation and preventive diplomacy efforts in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Chad and Mali, and a high-level mediation team for Ethiopia. NORCAP deployments to the AU liaison offices are noteworthy in terms of capacity building. Similar support, focusing on building the capacity of the RECs in preventive diplomacy and elections, is provided by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), with the support of Norway and Sweden. The Norwegian TFP programme greatly benefits peace support operations. Beyond capacity building and training, TFP has accompanied the development of strategic frameworks, including the AU’s peace support doctrine and the compliance framework. Further, cross-cutting support to its network of women mediators FemWise-Africa has enabled the AU to build the capacity of its liaison offices and the RECs by training and deploying female mediators. This has also strengthened the AU’s leverage at the national level, as the national chapters of FemWise-Africa also provide technical experts that serve as election observers and mediators.

The AU has also relied on technical support from the TFP programme to develop the AU Peace Fund’s outreach material, including a simplified infographic that has been used to create awareness of the existence of the Fund, its management system and its implementation. Through NORCAP and TFP, the AU has received various forms of capacity deployments, including advisors, coordinators and analysts who have worked on the formulation and operationalisation of the Fund. This has been used in the lead-up to the operationalisation of the Fund, in order to sensitise member states. On a strategic level, the engagement with Norway, as the co-chair of the Group of Friends of UN-AU Partnership, created room for active engagement on the Fund and the vision for a single funding source for African peace and security activities. At the level of the UN Security Council, the Nordic countries have continued to support the AU’s quest to attain predictable and sustainable finance. Looking ahead, through a direct financial injection into the CRF, the partnership will support the institution’s vision of working towards making the Fund a single source of financing for all AU peace and security activities.

The importance of Nordic support to the AU is evidenced by its ever-growing nature and the reliance on it by the AU Commission as a first port of call to provide capacity for new initiatives. This support is often described as flexible, responsive to the AU’s needs and a mutually beneficial partnership. Technical deployments follow direct requests from the Commission, within a reasonable timeframe offering a reliable technical capacity for the Commission, enabling the delivery of key programmatic priorities. This is superior to and different from short-term (often six-month) consultancy deployments. Secondly, the technical capacity-building initiatives are responsive to the Commission’s needs and are tailor made to support the delivery of institutional priorities. Most crucially, the diverse nature of Nordic support – beyond direct financial injection – is a unique model that other partners have now started to replicate. In summary, the Nordic-Africa partnership is a good partnership model that would benefit from additional review and documentation of best practices – outlining the concept of mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation.

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All views expressed by the editors and case study and contributing authors are theirs and theirs alone, and should not be attributed to their affiliated institutions.



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Over the past decade, the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden – have strengthened their relationship with African states and societies by supporting the African Peace and Security Architecture and promoting African involvement in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding efforts. This report offers an overview of the partnership between African and Nordic countries in peace and security from 2012 to 2021. It features original case studies on Nordic country cooperation with African actors and institutions, across an array of efforts, including support to peace processes, building capacity and training for inclusive conflict management, contributing to peace operations, and advancing gender equality, climate adaptation and resilience. It also includes perspectives on cross-cutting themes such as women, peace and security, youth, countering violent extremism, and partnership with the African Union. The report aims to be a resource for the policy community, mapping African-Nordic cooperation, in pursuit of peace and security in Africa.

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The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) carries out research and disseminates findings on global power relations, security policy, development issues, international economics and Norwegian foreign policy. For over 60 years, it has been a leading institute for research and communication about international issues of importance and relevance for Norway.

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The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) conducts independent, policy relevant research, provides analysis and informs decisionmaking, with the aim of advancing research-based knowledge of contemporary Africa. The institute is jointly financed by the governments of Finland, Iceland and Sweden.