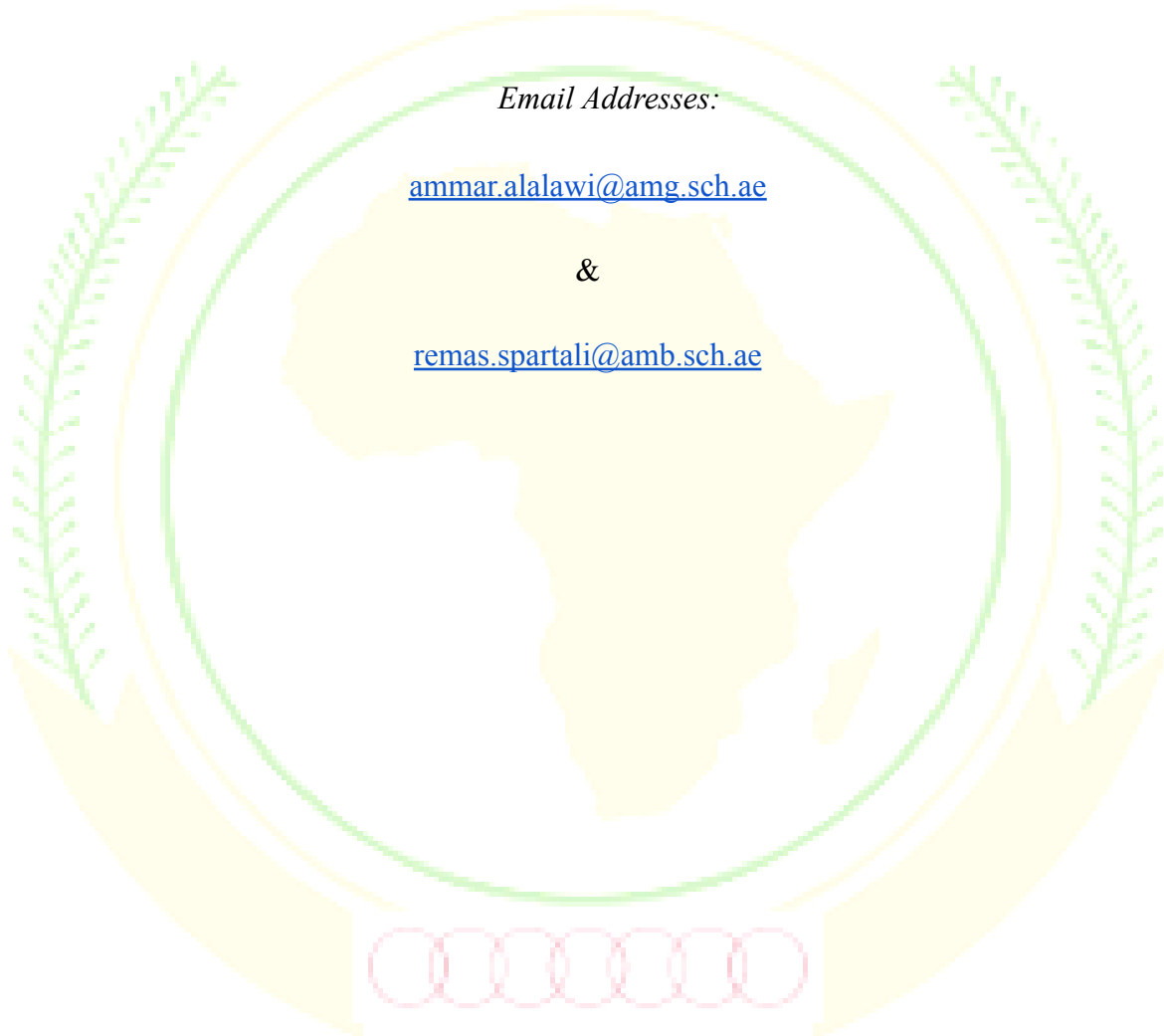


African Union Background Guide

AMSIMUN'26

Chairs: Ammar Alalawi & Remas Spartali



Dear Delegates,

We would like to welcome you to the African Union at AMSI Model United Nations 2026, with a genuine sense of responsibility towards one another and a collective vision. As your chairs, we have the special privilege of presiding over this forum that embodies not just the aspirations of those attending but also reflects the countless ways in which Africa has proven itself over centuries-old commitments to ensuring equality for all. The African Union is also central to the Pan-African Movement; thus, we look forward to working with each delegate, representing members from across all continents. This movement is based on the idea that, by working as a united body, we can create sovereignty and prosperity for all African countries.

The African Union, formally established in 2002 as the successor to the Organization of African Unity, is a shining example of a vision of continental integration. It is a body established not only based on political imperatives but also on the guiding principle of Ubuntu, a recognition that our humanity is inextricably linked. From the strategic framework of Agenda 2063 to the achievement of sustainable peace and security, the AU is the key architect of a self-reliant and prosperous Africa. We gather here today with the recognition that the decisions we make here have the weight of this noble legacy.

As delegates, we entrust each of you to complete a project that goes well beyond the material contained in this background guide. This guide is an outline; your contribution will be much more extensive and comprehensive as a result of individual, independent research and a thorough understanding of your nation's geopolitical position in the world. You must understand the differences among regional alliances and the potential economic differences among regions so that your presentation truly reflects your country and helps other nations reach their goals. Only through a complete understanding of the subjects of discussion will you have the ability to negotiate and build consensus at the level that this forum will expect of you.

We are excited to see you all on the committee. The committee will need to be diplomatic, honest, and dedicated to the ideals of the African Union. We are pleased to work with you during this process of discovering leadership and hope that you will be able to represent your countries with dignity and enthusiasm in May. **Please ensure that your Position Papers are submitted only via Mawakeb Mail by the deadline.** If further clarification or assistance is required, we are always available to answer any questions.

Your Chairs,
Ammar Alalawi & Remas Spartali

Topic: Assessing the Role of External Powers in Shaping Peace, Security, and Governance in Africa

External powers have played a vital yet complex role in shaping peace, security, and governance in Africa. The powers have been influential in the political and economic processes of the African continent since the colonial era. With the intervention of external actors such as the United Nations and the African Union, as well as collaborations with countries such as China, America, and France, peace processes have been maintained in the region. The peace processes have been sustained through the deployment of peacekeeping forces, development aid, foreign investment, and military aid to African countries. Despite the benefits of peace processes to the region in infrastructure development, counterterrorism, and humanitarian services, there have been concerns about economic dependency and the loss of national sovereignty. With Africa's rise as a global player, it is important to critically examine the processes by which external actors can be engaged to ensure peace and stability in the region.

History

The involvement of external actors in African peace, security, and governance can be traced to the late nineteenth-century partition of Africa by colonial empires, which established borders, created coercive centers of power, and subordinated African states to imperial interests. This has resulted in weak states and highly securitized centers of governance in Africa (Usiemure, 2019). During the Cold War, African states became theatres of indirect conflict among the United States of America, the Soviet Union, and their allies, through proxy wars and military aid to client states in Angola, the Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa (De Maio, 2010). The coincidence of decolonization and the Cold War led to the establishment of weak civil governments and powerful security forces that often served as platforms for coups d'état and autocracy in African states (Tafotie & Idahosa, 2017).

Since the 1960s, the United Nations (UN) has emerged as a key player in Africa's governance and security. The United Nations Operation in the Congo (1960-1964), the first large-scale UN peace-keeping operation in Africa, was the UN's inaugural exposure to the security challenges in Africa (Dorn, 2002). In the post-Cold War era, Africa has witnessed an unprecedented increase in UN peacekeeping operations, giving rise to multidimensional peacekeeping interventions in Namibia, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and many other African states (CRS, 2019). In the wake of this history of domination and conflict, Africa has developed its own institutions.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963, emphasized decolonization and non-interference. On the contrary, the contemporary African Union (AU), which was formed in 2002, has developed a stronger Peace and Security Architecture that includes the Peace and Security Council, African Standby Force, and a norm that allows for intervention in cases where war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity are being committed

(African Union, 2019). AU-led and hybrid operations, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia and the AU–UN Mission in Darfur, have been described as efforts to redefine the division of labor by allowing African forces to assume the lead in peace and security operations (PSO). However, external actors, such as the United Nations and donor states, continue to provide the majority of resources for AU-led and hybrid PSOs (Boutellis & Williams, 2013). This has been achieved through institutions such as the Joint United Nations–African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2719, which enable the UN to make assessed contributions to African-led PSO. This has allowed for African voices and ownership in peace support operations but has resulted in African financial dependence on external actors based in New York, Addis Ababa, Brussels, and other centers (African Union Peace and Security Council, 2013).

In the post-2000s, the external security environment in Africa has been characterized by a multipolar structure. Longtime Western military providers have provided military training, intelligence support, and counter-terrorism assistance. In addition, new actors (China and the Gulf Cooperation Council) have increased their involvement by expanding their presence through financial resources, arms sales, and providing security cooperation on the continent as well as outside the traditional framework for peace support operations provided through the United Nations ways of assistance to Africa due to difficulties associated with the current situation in Africa (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2024). The Chinese have been combining the deployment of troops in United Nations operations with large-scale lending for roads, ports, and energy, thereby giving them substantial influence over economic and political decisions, while also promoting the idea of non-interference (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

On the other hand, African-led coalitions, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram in Nigeria, have demonstrated African countries' willingness to assume collective responsibility for continental security. However, African-led operations have been heavily reliant on external funding and diplomatic support (African Union Peace and Security Council, 2013). The developments from colonial conquests through the Cold War to the present day United Nations and African Union operations, and the presence of a multiplicity of actors, provide a framework for the present debate on the potential of external actors to support inclusive governance, regional ownership, and sustainable peace, rather than dependency and the erosion of sovereignty (Africa Governance Report, 2019).

Analysis

The role of international actors in Africa is paradoxical: international collaboration is sometimes required in the short term to maintain stability, but it can also create a cycle of financial and strategic dependence that could threaten Africa's long-term sovereignty. The United Nations and the African Union have increasingly adopted a partnership approach, most notably through UN Security Council Resolution 2719, which authorizes the use of UN-assessed contributions to support AU-led peace support operations. This ensures that African troops, who have better knowledge of the region and are more legitimate, are in the lead, but the fact that the financial priorities are in New York and Brussels means that the strategic priorities of African security are also shaped by non-African donors.

Since the turn of the century, many African states have moved away from a predominantly Western-based security and dominance model towards an increasingly multipolar security environment. African nations have greater flexibility/choices when selecting partners than in previous decades: they can choose between traditional Western military assistance and new partners such as China and the Gulf Cooperation Council. China has developed a model that links security to economic development through large-scale infrastructure loans and troop deployments to UN peacekeeping missions across the continent; however, there are concerns about the possibility of external powers influencing the implementation of national economic policies through "debt-trap diplomacy." Additionally, while long-time partners typically require good governance or respect for human rights as preconditions for granting aid, most new actors impose an obligation of non-interference when entering into agreements that provide greater autonomy and potentially offer greater protection from accountability by authoritarian regimes.

African coalitions, such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, exemplify the shift toward "African solutions to African problems". However, these African coalitions are extremely vulnerable due to the absence of a long-term internal funding source. Because they rely on external funding to remain operational, they must often adapt their objectives to align with their funders' goals. The presence of foreign military bases and private military contractors adds complexity and confusion to how to govern security on the continent, as they operate outside the African Peace and Security Architecture. Therefore, African nations must transition from being venues for external conflicts to architects of security, drawing upon external resources without compromising their national sovereignty.

As Chairs, we strongly encourage delegates to look beyond the polarized debate and focus on practical, multilateral approaches that highlight the need for dialogue, transparency, and collaborative policymaking. We would like to see the delegates come forward with proposals that highlight the need for structured dialogue between the nations of Africa and the outside world, enhance the overall bargaining power of the nations of Africa, and strengthen the collaborative relationships with the outside world by ensuring the need for accountability, sustainability, and respect.

Questions to be answered in your resolutions:

- What frameworks can be established to ensure that external military interventions and private military companies are accountable to African regional governance?
- How can African states coordinate their foreign policies to prevent being used as proxies in the strategic competition between global powers?
- In what way can external powers be encouraged to prioritise long-term institutional capacity building over short-term military “fixes” for instability?
- How can the African Union balance the “non-interference” policies of new global partners with its own mandate to protect human rights and democratic governance
- How can African nations develop independent funding mechanisms for the African standby force to reduce reliance on UN-assessed contributions?

Starter Resources

1. <https://rsdi.ae/en/publications/shaping-the-future-of-peace-the-african-unions-expanding-influence-on-global-security-governance>
2. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/china-influence-africa-security-engagements/>
3. <https://www.cna.org/analyses/2024/10/the-military-and-security-dimensions-of-the-prcs-africa-presence>
4. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-12/in-hindsight-the-financing-of-au-led-peace-support-operations-what-next.php>
5. <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/AU-UN-Partnership.pdf>

Country Matrix

Algeria - Angola - Chad - China - Democratic Republic of Congo - Egypt - Ethiopia - France - Germany - Ghana - Guinea - Italy - Kenya - Mali - Morocco - Mozambique - Niger - Nigeria - Rwanda - Russia - Senegal - Somalia - South Africa - Sudan - Tanzania - Uganda - United Kingdom - United States of America (USA) - Zambia - Zimbabwe

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