

Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Regional Peace and Security



26th November 2018, Sunnyside Park Hotel, Parktown

Executive Summary

On 26 November 2018, the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) together with the Norwegian Embassy hosted a multi-stakeholder workshop entitled *‘Regional Peace and Security Issues’*. The Minister of Small and Medium Business Development and Chair of ANC International Relations Sub-committee, Ambassador Lindiwe Zulu, delivered the keynote address.

The aim of the dialogue was to address trends and prospects as well as challenges relating to regional peace and security in SADC. The discussion provided a reflection on the recent elections in Zimbabwe and the Kingdom of eSwatini as well as a forecast of the elections in the DRC and Madagascar in December 2018. The one major fundamental theme that the discussion highlighted was that of good governance and the fact that it has to produce useful outcomes for ordinary citizens in terms of development, economic growth and stability. Other notable discussion points were the history of political solidarity on the continent and the ANC liberation movement, and South Africa’s interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Zimbabwe, and eSwatini.

Key Issues

The need for perceptive political economy analysis when assessing regional peace and security issues

A political economy analysis is important in terms of assessing peace and security issues within the region and broader continent. It is clear that the regional economic context cannot be meaningfully evaluated without factoring in the complex and ongoing political conflicts, as well as security challenges that afflict the region. This was noted by Minister Zulu, when she stated: “[s]ometimes we tend to discuss the politics and separate it from the economy, whereas the two are very much intertwined”. She went on to give the example of Zimbabwe, where the complicated political situation has the potential to adversely affect economy.

The work of the ANC International Relations (IR) committee is divided into six core thematic areas

The ANC IR committee’s work is premised on seven thematic areas that cover: peace and security issues; international and continental solidarity; reform of global institutions; political party engagement; policy formulation and development; and campaign support. The aforementioned thematic areas inform the respective mandates of the following ANC IR committee working groups: *Peace-Building and Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development*; *Continental and International Solidarity* (on contexts such as Western Sahara and Palestine), *Transformation of Global Governance* (relating to the reform of global governance structures); *Party to Party and Multi-Party Relations* (includes former liberation party engagement); *Policy Development Working Group* and *Campaigns* (focuses on issues such as raising awareness around human rights). These working groups outline the scope of the ANC IR committee’s work.

Former liberation movements and accountable governance

In terms of regional former liberation movement solidarity, it is important to pose urgent questions relating to accountable and transparent governance. As noted by Minister Zulu it is important for former liberation parties to generate a system of oversight in terms of their actions and ‘behaviours’. In this regard there is a need to provide a sustainable and consensus-based framework that outlines governance ‘best practice’ standards for the SADC region. Such a framework would aid regional governments in dealing with governance challenges within a rapidly changing (regional and international) political environment, in a manner that does not precipitate or trigger conflict. Key to this issue is how dominant and incumbent former liberation party governments or leaders will navigate the nascent rise of opposition movements throughout the region that threaten their dominance and political power.

Regional conflict resolution and peace processes need to be supported by socioeconomic initiatives

Conflict resolution processes within the region must be underpinned by economic development and human security initiatives in order to ensure sustainable peace. Comprehensive peace within the region needs to be complemented by far-reaching socioeconomic programmes relating to education, food security, and (social as well as economic) infrastructure development. This will enhance the prospects for sustainable, region-wide peace. The contexts in the DRC, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe highlight the importance of socioeconomic factors in terms of safeguarding peace. Minister Zulu highlighted the

importance of “people-driven development”, infrastructure and human security when she asserted: “[i]t is good for us to ‘silence the guns’, but in my personal view [once you have] silenced the guns ...there are still questions such as: what are people eating? Have they got [access] to health and education?”

National sovereignty vs the African Agenda

There is an observable tension between regional states’ national interests and the broader regional as well as continental agenda. At times states use the issue of sovereignty to counter continental and international multilateral resolutions or proposed interventions. Mr Piers Pigou, from the International Crisis Group, noted “the challenges of navigating the politics of sovereignty, and the way sovereignty is used [by states] as a way of averting, and not engaging with, particular challenges that may relate to our [regional] multilateral commitments and objectives”. Minister Zulu, highlighted the importance of clearly delineating South Africa’s national interests, as a means of averting discord with the African Agenda. She asserted that clearly outlining South Africa’s national interest has to be done within the context of South Africa’s history in terms of international relations and international solidarity. This means addressing pertinent questions such as: “What do ‘national interests’ refer to? What are the national interests of South Africa in light of friendly relations with regional states?” This is because the South African government is coming under increasing pressure from South African citizens around the issue of how South Africa’s interventions (be they humanitarian or focused on peace and security) contribute to the country’s well being and address its socioeconomic challenges. Hence, the South African government needs to strategically calibrate how to ensure that there is a complementarity between its African Agenda and the pressing needs of its citizens. However, this is a challenge that also relates to other SADC members, as they seek to balance their national priorities and regional commitments.

Recommendations

Establishment of a peace and security monitoring framework

A persistent key challenge pertains to the issue of how regional bodies and states can secure long-term peace and prevent conflict recurrences or relapses. Central to this issue is the establishment of national and regional (albeit complementary) monitoring frameworks that assess peace interventions, and provide tangible policy insights that can address some of the key challenges related to maintaining peace on the continent. South Africa has invested significantly towards continental peacekeeping processes and initiatives, yet there appear to be lapses or regressions in contexts such as Burundi, DRC and Zimbabwe. Therefore a nationally formulated peace-monitoring framework that could be aligned to regional security processes, would help the government and ANC to assess the effectiveness of their regional peace interventions, in order to better understand how to ensure sustainable long-term peace.

Ensuring the independence of the ANC and South African government in terms of conflict mediation

Minister Zulu highlighted a key challenge of conflict mediation in terms of the emergence of tensions between closely allied regional governments. She noted that the DRC government (of former president Kabila) expressed dissatisfaction with the ANC IR committee meeting with Congolese opposition parties in the lead-up to the 2018 December elections. It is critical to consider how can this be overcome in future. Government and party policy makers need to review how the ANC and government can be viewed as

credible peace brokers in mediation engagements, if the incumbent governments facing political opposition have strong ties to the South African government and by extension the ANC.

Strengthening regional governance institutions

There has to be greater alignment between SADC programmes and processes, with African Union resolutions and initiatives. For instance the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is located within SADC. However, there does not seem to be complementarity between SADC and the PAP. The Pan-African Parliament is the people's or citizens' voice in Africa, meaning that its role differs from that of the government-oriented SADC Executive or the SADC Council. Therefore the PAP can serve as a bridge between SADC leaders and citizens. This highlights how special effort needs to be made to strengthen not only SADC executive bodies, but also citizen-focused institutions such as the Parliamentary Forum of SADC. Furthermore, regional parliamentary forums could be developed to promote enhanced regional democratic governance processes, as they could allow for greater opposition oversight and representation, especially noting the challenges relating to opposition party representation and political participation from a regional outlook.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Brief do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the brief are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:

S A L 

International liaison, dialogue and research

The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a South African-based not-for-profit civil society organisation which, through advocacy, dialogue, policy consensus and in-depth research and analysis, influences the current thinking and debates on foreign policy especially regarding African crises and conflicts.

*SALO would like to thank
The Royal Norwegian Embassy for their direct support for this event*



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