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Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI
إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**African Union and the Challenges of Implementing
'Responsibility to Protect' in Africa**

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive reflection on the African Union efforts to address the 'new' security challenges in Africa through the implementation of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P). R2P is an international policy framework for the prevention and response to mass atrocities such as war crimes; crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The United Nations (UN) at the 2005 World Summit Outcome endorsed R2P. The AU is often regarded as part of the historical development and a key actor for the promotion and practice of R2P for two main reasons. First, the AU introduced the 'right to intervene' in situations of mass atrocities as contained in Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act. This reflects a departure from the OAU's principle of non-intervention to a norm of non-indifference. Second, AU member states voiced support for the R2P even before the 2005 UN endorsement of the R2P. This is evidenced in the Common paper known as the "Ezulwini Consensus" adopted at the AU Executive Council Seventh Extraordinary session in Addis Ababa. Despite its increasingly interventionist framework, the AU attempts to halt mass atrocities has been severely challenged as witnessed in Darfur, and more recently Libya. Yet, there are claims that the AU has provided leadership in the prevention and containment of potential atrocities notably in the post-election violence Kenya and perhaps Ivory Coast. This paper argues that even though the AU may have made some progress in the *prevention* of mass atrocities, it has experienced significant setbacks in halting actual conflict related atrocities. Accordingly, the AU security architecture has certainly failed to address the 'new' security challenges associated with actual conflict-related mass atrocities. The author explains why the AU rhetorical support for a robust African security framework has not translated into reality and, concludes with a set of policy questions and recommendations on how to enhance the capacity of the AU Peace and Security architecture to implement R2P in Africa.

About the Author

Dr. Jide Martyns Okeke is currently a Research Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden. He is contributing to the Security and Governance in Africa and, the SIPRI Military Expenditure research programmes. He has served as a consultant for a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations - most recently the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana and West African Civil Society Institute (Ghana). He holds a PhD in Politics and International

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