



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**ASSESSMENT OF THE AU's CHALLENGE ON THE
OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE CONTINENTAL EARLY
WARNING SYSTEM: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS**

BY

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JUNE, 2023

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PEACE
AND SECURITY STUDIES**

JUNE, 2023

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**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
STUDIES (IPSS)**

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Acknowledgment

Firstly, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and opportunity to start and finish my Master's program.

Secondly, I would like to express my sincere acknowledgement to my advisor, Ahmed Hassen (PhD) for his guidance and valuable comments. Without his support, it would have been difficult to produce this paper. I am grateful to express my appreciation for his determined professionalism and unlimited support.

Thirdly, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends for their limitless support. Their support has served me as an encouragement to keep on going.

Above all I would like to thank God for giving me the physical and mental fortitude and opportunity to start and finish my Master's program.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	The African Peace and Security Architecture
ASF	The African Standby Force
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	The Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEWARN	IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CMD	Conflict Management Division
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMWARN	COMESA Early Warning System and Response Network
CSVMS	Country Structural Vulnerability and Mitigation Strategies
CSVRA	Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments
EAC	East African Community
EASF	East African Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central Africa
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning System and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EWS	Early Warning System
FEWER	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response

GDELT The Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone

IEP Institute for Economics and Peace

IGAD Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IRC International Rescue Committee

MoU Memorandum of Understanding

NA Not Available

OAU Organization of African Unity

OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PoW Panel of the Wise

PSC Peace and Security

R2P Responsibility to Protect

REC Regional Economic Communities

SADC Southern African Development Community

UCDP Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNSG United Nations Security General

USHMM United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “Assessment of the AU’s challenge on the operationalization of the continental early warning system: internal and external factors” was conducted with the objective to identify internal and external factors that affects the performance of the continental early warning system of the African Union. Early warning systems are necessary for detecting, analyzing, and addressing potential conflicts before they escalate into severe outcome. When used effectively, EWS helps prevent human suffering, reduce economic loss, and enhance the efficiency of humanitarian aid efforts. The African Union's Continental Early Warning System intended to monitor and provide early warnings on potential conflicts in the continent. However, it has been plagued with multiple challenges to its performance over the last two decades; hence the advantage of researches such as this thesis is immense in terms of identifying the factors that challenge the subject and make appropriate recommendations for better performance. To this end, this qualitative explanatory research method used key informants who are experts on the field of Security Studies, Diplomacy and International relations which were identified and purposefully selected to participate in the thesis. The ten participants in this thesis research were subsequently, interviewed or given open ended questionnaires to fill out. In the end, their response analyzed to identify the factors affecting the subject understudy’s performance, why these factors are persisting over the years and recommendations for better performance were derived from the data. Moreover, prior studies by other researchers, press briefing, journal articles and online sources properly used as part of literature review; and, to make sense of the data. This thesis has further found that despite its significance for the continent, the continental early warning system faced challenge such as early warning and early response gap, lack of proper funding and problematic sources of funding, from AU’s forms as a Weak and bureaucratic institution, unclear and overlapping responsibilities between the AU and RECs, organizational inefficiencies and recent restructuring. This study has also discovered that the main reasons that these challenges are persisting are lack of proper funding and lack of political will at the African Union. This is something that must be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of the continental early warning system in preventing and managing conflicts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

With conflicts ranging in different part of the world and international organization focusing their attention towards preventive measures has brought in to focus the early warning system. From experiences of the cold war and the genocide that took place in Rwanda has brought into light that preventive actions through early warning systems are more effective and less costly than conflict management and peace building efforts. One of the international organizations that took the early warning system as preventive measures is the African Union.

After the independence of most African countries; 32 African leaders of independent countries came together collectively to establish the Organization of the African Unity (OAU). The organization had been successful in showing a united front against colonialism however; it did not focus on reducing the violence in most African nations. When the Rwandan genocide took the lives of around one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus, the OAU failed in preventing this massive catastrophe mainly because of its non-interventionist principle (Munya,1999).

During the period of Cold War, there was a shift within the international system paradigm from focusing on the idea of state security towards putting more attention on human security. The mentioned factors mainly caused the transformation of the Organization of the African Unity and the establishment of the African Union, in 2002, following the adoption of the AU Constitutive Act in 2000 at the AU summit in Lomé, Togo. The African Union had a practical mandate by establishing a non-indifference principle in internal conflicts in respect of grave circumstances like war crimes, genocides and crime against humanity (Ani, 2016). The weakness and failure of the OAU was to be addressed with the establishment of the AU and strengthening African responses to conflicts within African countries (Desmidt, 2019).

The AU introduced the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the development of a strong institutional framework for intervening in internal conflicts to protect humans. The Framework of the APSA brought in a significant development within it, the creation of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) (Bah et al., 2014). This was a

significant development for the conflict prevention agenda. The Implementation process started during 2007 and went operational in 2009. As the early warning discourse became a significant topic during this time, the CEWS took the center stage of the African Union to achieve its goal in preventing conflicts before escalation. When the CEWS was established, its main objective lied in information collection, strategic breakdown of data's acquired, early warning reports and engagement with key decision makers and coordination and partnership between the AU, REC and other key stakeholders (Zondi, 2017).

The development of the Continental Early Warning System showed hope for collaboration between African countries to start the path of information exchange and building a peaceful Africa. Available literature on the issue suggest that the lack of information to be gathered for the Continental Early Warning System to function; and the Peace and Security Council to pass decision comes from the unwillingness of member states to share state information; technical challenges; financial constraints; and bureaucratic decision making; have been the consistent challenges that the institution has yet to address or tackle to achieve its set out objective.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Africa has been one of the continents that has been immersed in both state and non-state-based conflicts for many years now. The Uppsala conflict database showed during 2011, 15 state based conflicts and during 2021 it rose to 25 state based conflicts (Julia et al., 2020). Researches on the AU mention that the instability in many corners of the continent imminent from the lack of institutional mechanisms and capacity at the continental level that can address the problem. After the establishment of Continental Early Warning System until 2021 according to Uppsala, many African countries have witnessed conflicts that have claimed thousands of lives. The recent war in Ethiopia, the coup d'état in Burkina Faso, Mali and protest in Sierra Leone puts into doubt the ability and commitment of the Continental Early Warning System in its role of conflict prevention through the development of appropriate response strategies.

Various literature on the topic emphasize on the CEWS's struggle to achieve its objective as a result of insufficient human and technical capacity within the organization, securing adequate and dependable funding and the over-sensitive nature of member states in embracing any activity forwarded to prevent emerging conflicts or address structural challenges that might

later on become causes for violent conflicts. These challenges have been the bottleneck for the CEWS since its establishment and its inadequacy has cost lives, funding and further escalation of wars that could have been prevented at the beginning.

Researches has extensively covered the challenges that the Continental Early Warning System is facing however the challenges it faced during the operationalization of this institution still exist to this day. Even though the challenges mentioned above have been identified the answer to why these challenges have continued to be a bottleneck to the institution is yet to be addressed. This paper will be employing the security seeking and colonial legacy perspective to better understand the persistence of the challenges of the Continental Early Warning System. Moreover, it seeks to investigate the role of external and internal factors and actors that may have a part in the ineffectiveness of the Continental Early Warning System to prevent conflicts in the African continent.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study is to understand the reason as to why the aforementioned challenges such as: insufficient human and technical capacity within the organization, securing adequate and dependable funding and the over-sensitive nature of member states in embracing any activity towards conflict prevention has continued throughout two decades and bringing forth recommendations.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This research has the following specific objectives:

- To explore the internal and external factors that influence the effective implementation and functioning to AU's Continental Early Warning System
- To identify the reason for the persistence of the challenges of the AU's CEWS
- To provide appropriate recommendations that would help address the obstacles that stand against the effectiveness of the CEWS objective.

1.4 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What specific internal and external factors are impeding the proper functioning of the Continental Early Warning System?
- Why are the challenges specified still prevalent and affecting the objective of Continental Early Warning System?
- How are the specific internal and external factors affecting the function of the Continental Early Warning System?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important as it delivers necessary information and recommendations for the institutions and academics. It is critically important to the following stakeholders in one way or another:

- To the Conflict Management Division (CMD) to tackle major challenges that impede the implementation of Continental Early Warning System
- To the AU, for embedding and fusing the culture of conflict prevention
- To researchers, whose interests are in conflict prevention and early warning in particular

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study would focus on understanding the underlying cause of the challenges and its prevalence till this day. The paper will also look into conflict prevention and early warning system theories. Since the literature have extensively covered the reason behind the creation of CEWS and its operation, this paper won't be going into the already densely covered literature. However, this study will investigate what factors challenge the proper functioning of the Continental Early Warning System and why these challenges to conflict prevention are still persistent.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

With all research studies, limitations are to be expected; this paper was also met with some limitations. The first limitation is of time. This research study was limited time constraint as it was a master's thesis to be submitted within a certain timeframe. Another limitation of the study is that the researcher was not able to conduct focus group discussions with key participants. Since, the key informants believed that the information they provide is sensitive in nature and that it might have implication for their career path and current occupation; they refused to participate in the focus group discussion; which limited the depth and quality of data that could have been obtained if the focus group discussion was to be conducted. Furthermore, this research study was limited by financial constraints of the research which limited the capacity of the researcher to conduct a broader study on the topic.

1.8 Organization of the study

This paper will be constructed in six chapters. The first Chapter will be presenting the introduction to the overall paper. It presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem by identifying the gap in literature, subsequently the first chapter will present the Objective of the study and the research questions that it attempts to answer.

The second chapter covers conceptual framework on concepts like conflict prevention and early warning while the literature review focuses on three areas. The first focus would be on the literatures regarding the historical institutional efforts towards peace and security in Africa and focuses on the formation and implementation of the CEWS under the APSA as well as its partnership with the REC. This review of the literature would give the audience a brief understanding the concepts that will be used repeatedly throughout this paper and of how, when and why the CEWS is established. In identifying its major reason for establishment and its objective, it will help in identifying its current status. The second focus will be on identifying the weakness and challenges other authors have identified. This will help in understanding the challenges the Continental Early Warning System has faced from the establishment until now. It not only helps in understanding the challenges it faces but also to identify the continuity of these challenges and also emerging challenges.

The third chapter cover the methodology used to conduct this research. It will present the argument to why the research design, data collection mechanism and the participants selected for this study. It will also present the way the data collected from the selected participants is analyzed with the presentation of the ethical standards employed by this study.

The fourth chapter of the study presents the data that was obtained and the interpretation of the data after a careful analysis. It discusses the source of data and participants, the major findings on AU achievements in regards to conflict prevention, major challenged to the CEWS, reasons for persistence and the internal and external factors. Following this chapter the fifth chapter goes into detail to discuss the major findings with regulating it with the literature that is available .Lastly, the six chapter provides recommendations based on the study's findings and makes recommendations for improvement and further study on the topic area.

CHAPTER TWO

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 Conflict Prevention

After the cold war major intra and interstate conflict started to emerge and more focus was started to be given by the international community's toward an approach that is the contentment of violent conflict and shifting the focus from reaction to preventive methods (Lund, 2009). Dag Hammarskjold was the first to use the term "preventive diplomacy" in the 1960s referring to it as a mechanism to keep regional conflicts enclosed within the region and not have a spillover effect (Peace Insight, NA). However Lund (1994) argues that this type of diplomacy is concerned with efforts to either prevent or contain violent conflicts at a lower level/ incipient stage. Following this Boutros - Ghali's during the 1990s built upon this concept and defined it as a diplomatic technique to prevent disputes from arising and escalating into armed conflict and also from spreading (Butros Butros Ghali, 1992). The concept of conflict prevention has been distinguished from other approaches toward conflict mainly by its focus on *when* the effort comes into action (Lund, 2009, pp.288). In order to discuss about the concept of conflict prevention it is essential to look into the concept of conflict and prevention.

According to Wallensteen (2002), conflict is when two parties or more strive to acquire an available set of scarce resources at the same time in which this opposing action results in destructive mode of behavior. Conflicts can arise due to economic, political and socio-cultural context of history of colonialism and violence, forms of governance, unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities of self-realization. When conflict arise and escalate into violence, it might not only be direct violence but also structural and cultural (Galtung, J. 1969). Hence conflict is seen as undesired outcome for both national and international actors taking World War I, II and the Cold War as a learning lesson of the aftermath. Henceforth violent conflict has to be prevented. So what does prevention mean? Looking at the term prevention it refers to an advance action against something possible or probable (Norkus, 1996, pp.1). In the past international

relations and diplomacy were always concerned with the resolution of conflict and not of the prevention of conflict however Kofie (1999) “culture of prevention” has emphasized on the importance to move from the culture of reaction to a culture of prevention throughout the UN system.

Stephen J. Stedman (1995) made a distinction between preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention which are sometimes used interchangeably. He stated that preventive diplomacy attempts to stop conflicts from becoming violent or escalating to a higher level while conflict prevention aims at looking into the supposed roots (poverty, environmental degradation, overpopulation, resource competition, and lack of legitimate political institutions) of such conflicts. In here it can be seen that the conflict prevention not only prevent conflict that are on the break of major humanitarian crises but also focus on solving the root causes of conflicts to insure that conflict doesn't occur. In this case we can take Max van der Stoel (1994), in which he argues that Conflict preventions an affair of multiple dimensions involving various time frames in which this prevention could be short-term or long-term. The strategies employed to prevent conflicts can be categorized into two main groups: operational prevention and structural prevention. The Direct/operational prevention is a preventive method that involves immediate interventions to prevent an imminent outbreak of violence, such as using mediators. Structural prevention on the other hand includes longer-term institutional or grassroots changes aiming at creating peaceful and sustainable communities while addressing the root causes of violence (Stoel, 1994). This measure aims at acting before violent conflict fully breaks out since it is more effective and less costly than acting on a war that has already erupted (Lund, 2009, pp.289)

For successful conflict prevention strategies, it is widely agreed that a "community first" approach must be used. This means prioritizing the needs and concerns of local communities affected by the conflict (Peace Insight, NA). From the concept forwarded by different scholars, conflict prevention is an effort aiming to prevent disputes from arising between parties, from escalating into conflicts; containing and limiting the spread of conflicts when they occur, and post-conflict relapse into conflict by removing its causes and creating conditions in which it cannot occur (Norkus, 1996, pp. 4).

The African Union has conflict prevention as its main objective after the transition from the OAU and taking the Rwandan genocide case as learning experience to avoid such huge humanitarian atrocity. Conflict prevention at the AU level has both operational components to address imminent or escalating conflict, and structural components to tackle deeper causes of conflict (Igarape Institute, 2018, pp.19). In conflict prevention, it is crucial to maintain alertness, continuously monitor the situation, and have a thorough comprehension of conflict dynamics at all levels. This includes identifying areas where conflicts might arise and taking steps to reduce the chances of a relapse into conflict after an initial resolution. Early warning can be instrumental for preventing violent conflicts from occurring and also escalating. The AU's PSC protocol has recognized the importance of early warning as a conflict prevention strategy and tasks the responsible bodies in pre-empting and reporting conflicts before they escalate. Early warning helps to build capacity for conflict prevention and can enhance the ability of parties involved in violent conflicts to resolve disputes and address underlying issues that lead to disputes (Tiruneh, 2010).

2.1.2 Early Warning

Early warning is one of the mechanisms for conflict prevention that helps to ascertain whether and when violent conflict could happen and prevent it from taking place through early-response (Ackermann, 2020, pp.4). As was said in the previous paragraphs what makes conflict prevention different from other conflict approach is in regards to the “*when*” and early warning system being one of the mechanisms in which “*early*” indicates the time prior to the outbreak of a situation where there is time for action to diminish or avert the potential harm. And warning which is a communication protocol that gives warning of a potential act of violence (UNDRR, 2007, pp.2). While system indicates a standardized set of procedures to which something is done (ibid).

Early warning system leads to a better understanding of socially complex system and makes policy response more appropriate before disaster take place and helps in preparation to counter any situation before they occur. The central aim of early warning system for conflict is to identify and take action to mitigate diverse forms of political unrest, ranging from local disagreements to full-scale warfare (Stedman, 1997). Early warning systems are based on the

assumption that predicting and forecasting potential conflicts can assist in leading to better decision making, risk reduction, a more effective prevention and for response measure taken by international actors. According to Souare and Handy (2013) early warning is a system used as a detection of structural and imminent signs of violent conflicts during different stages.

This system is also define as systematic collection and analysis of information on areas with potential conflicts with the aim to anticipate violent conflict, develop strategic response and presentation of the strategic response to key actors for decision making and preventive action. Hence from the above definitions it can be seen that the concept of early warning system is seen as a system that has a role in collecting data and analysis the data collected but also it is a system that formulates recommendations on strategic early response. However Kuroda (1996) argues that the conflict early warning system is not an end by itself because it is a tool for preparing, prevention and mitigation with regards to conflict situations that needs a capability of a timely action for the system to be effective. Hence, the concept of early response comes into play. The coordinated action between early warning and early response determines the success of early warning system since the system is for preventing conflicts. Early response is defined as one of a conflict management initiative taken after the early warning to prevent the occurrence or escalation of conflict (Tadakazu, 2017, pp.3).

The early warning system has been used by countries for anticipating attacks by other states, anticipating natural or human made disaster, forecasting economic conditions and during 1992 early warning system was officially adopted by the UN as a prevention mechanism against violent conflict following the release of report titled “An Agenda for Peace” (Souare and Handy, 2013). African Union had also adopted conflict prevention mechanism with the adoption of the “Cairo Declaration” establishing the Central Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution. This system was adopted by global community to prevent mass casualties, large scale displacement, and disastrous outcomes for civilians based on various legal, moral, political, humanitarian, and economic reasons (Gates et al.,2016).

According to Hegre et al. (2017) and the stability journal website(2022) significant resources have been allocated towards sophisticated methods and analytical instruments to predict impending organized political violence however there remains a marked discrepancy between the aspirations and tangible outcomes of conflict early warning. While the systematic conflict

forecasting made its focus on peace and conflict research for many years, there is still a deficit in political will and concrete measures that correspond to the funding dedicated to conflict early warning system

2.1.3 Political will or Denialism

Political will play an important role when it comes to preventing conflict. With early warning mechanism being there to support decision makers on the course of action to either prevent conflict from happening or from sustaining the conflict before it escalate. Hence it is important to also unpack the concept of political will. According to (development, 2004) political will is the determination of an individual political actor to do and say things that will produce a desired outcome and considers the purpose of political as the enhancement influence and reputation. It is also defined as the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives in this case preventing conflict before it happens or before it escalate (Brinkerhoff, 2010). CreativeTweed (2023) considers political will as a black box where inputs such as reform efforts, program designs and delivery and implementation efforts are thrown in and the outcome could either be successful policy reforms, effective implementation or the output could be a failed reform/ failed implementation.

According to Asim Mujkic(2015) the presence of political will is detected when decision makers who share the same understanding of the problem and who are fully committed to providing support are in an agreement on ensuring the effectiveness of the policy. Hence when bringing in the discussion of early warning and early response, political will plays an important role in which the decision to implement the recommended course of action forwarded by the early warning system is made by the decision makers for early response. For the effective coordination of this two and to prevent conflict there needs to be a shared understanding of the problem and full commitment on the agreement of preventing conflicts that could cause humanitarian crisis. So when talking about the lack of political will, according to Abazovic D. and Mujkic A.(pp.13, 2015) it refers to the absence of action. Political will has an effect on decision making and decision makers could be influenced by national, political, or economical interest.

When it comes to decision making not only political will influences the outcomes of actions but also political denialism plays a role. Hoofnagle (2009) brothers define the concept of denialism as an approach that has the ultimate goal of rejecting a proposition on scientific consensus exists. Denialism could be motivated by greed, ideology, selectivity eccentricity and idiosyncrasy. In regards to the AU PSC some member states holds back from reacting when situations in their countries are subjected to early warning through denying the objective and credible early warning signals of potential violent conflicts (ISSAfrica.org, 2017). Hence it could be seen that the issue of Denialism is strongly linked to political will in which some member states make either show political will when it aligns with their interest or deny the facts presented if it doesn't align with its interest.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Historical Institutional Efforts towards Peace and Security in Africa

2.2.1.1 The Organization of the African Union (OAU)

During the struggle for independence, African leaders, activists and scholars started the Pan-Africanism movement (Emerson, 1962). The concept of Pan-Africanism has reflected that all Africans have a spiritual relation with one other for having suffered colonialism and slave trade together in the past, "Together, they should progress towards a new and hopeful future."(Emerson, 1962). Subsequently, the Pan Africanism movement had brought in the establishment of the OAU in 1963 in order to create a single institution that has a collective identity to unite and better Africa (IRC, 2002).

Although its creation was impeded by two primary issues of how to liberate Africa from European control and how to divide the continent into territories (Emerson, 1962), the OAU was eventually founded under its charter on May 25, 1963, to advance regional collaboration among recently independent African nations. The association aimed to strengthen the unity and coherence of African nations, coordinate and cooperate for the benefit of African people, defend their autonomy, safeguard their borders and right to self-governance, eradicate colonialism in all forms, and foster cooperation among countries. In practice, however, the OAU focused mainly on strengthening the newly independent African states (Sharpe, 2017).

Despite creating an organization for conflict prevention, the OAU has seen limited success in resolving conflicts and managing crises in certain cases and significant failure in the majority of others. The organization's legal framework was one key factor that hindered its potential for conflict prevention and resolution (Munya, 1999). The OAU Charter required member states to uphold various core principles, including non-interference in fellow states' internal affairs. As a result, this restricted the OAU's jurisdiction to intervene in internal conflicts unless the affected state gave consent (Sharpe, 2017).

The OAU Charter also emphasized equal sovereignty among member states and respecting each state's territorial integrity and independent existence. Member states committed to peaceful conflict resolution methods such as negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration. The OAU's commitment to non-intervention contributed to its restrained approach towards conflicts. However, coupled with financial challenges, this approach hampered its ability to address violent conflict and structural problems in African countries. As a result, the unsuccessful efforts of the OAU highlighted the need for a new organization with revised principles (Munya, 1999).

2.2.1.2 The Establishment of the African Union (AU)

The main corner stone of the OAU security culture was set out on article 3 where it mentions the four elements that contributed to the security culture. These cornerstones were African disputes had to be quarantined from external, non-African influences, sovereign, equality, the institutionalization of the norm of non-intervention, and the keeping of the colonial boundaries (AU, 2003).

Despite the OAU being able to institutionalize a number of norms, it wasn't able to keep up with the changing world because it was never able to effectively enforce it on its member state. The high level of conflicts in Africa, including high numbers of civilian deaths and human rights abuses such as sexual exploitation, along with the expensive costs of peacekeeping and post-conflict intervention, have led both African leaders and the international community to shift their focus towards preventing conflicts before they take place instead of being reactive to the conflicts that have erupted. This shift has resulted in the development of knowledge-based prototypes that can assistance decision makers in identifying policy developments that are vital

in a timely manner. In 1990, the OAU had established the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in 1992 in order to work towards resolving any type of violent conflict within the continent. The adoption of the Cairo Declaration in June 1993, put the above into effect through creating several AU institutions and practices such as the Peace Fund and eminent persons, however it did not explicitly establish a unit for early warning. Nonetheless, the Mechanism aimed to prevent conflict situations, while also offering peacemaking and peace-building efforts during and after conflicts.

Subsequently, this forced the OAU to evolve into the African Union (AU) in 2000 and include norms that are related to unconstitutional government and humanitarian intervention (AU, 2003). The establishment of the AU collective security system in 2003, known as the African Union Peace and Security Council was to overcome the weakness of the OAU which had failed in preventing many violent conflict that had caused humanitarian crisis (AU, 2003). This operational structure was to overlook areas of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace support operation, intervention, peace building and post- conflict reconstruction. This organ is set as the center point for decision-making with the objective to facilitate response that are timely and efficient to conflict and crisis situations in Africa through collective security and early-warning arrangement (AU, 2003).

2.2.1.3 Non- Interventionism to non - Indifference

During the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU), there was a shift of principles and one of it was the shift from non-intervention to non-indifference, allowing for a stronger response to conflicts in Africa. This shift had led to the creation of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) being the AU's main decision-making organ. The AU Constitutive Act made commitments to respect democratic principles, human rights, and condemn unconstitutional changes of government, among others. However, sovereignty remains important as noted in Article 3 of the AU Constitutive Act. Despite normative changes, member states still place limitations based on sovereignty. A closer analysis of recent interventions reveals these limitations, such as Burundi's rejection of a proposed AU force. To better understand vulnerabilities in the system, it's necessary to closely examine the African Union's peace and security architecture and the factors and actors involved in security challenges.

2.2.1.4 The African Union Peace and Security Council

Following the entry into force of its establishing protocol in May 2004, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) was established (PSC Protocol). According to the African Union in 2003, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) acts as a system for collective security and early-warning, which would enable a prompt and effective response to conflicts and crisis situations in Africa. Sharpe (2017) underscores that the PSC has a range of objectives which include promoting peace, stability, and security throughout the African, as well as working to anticipate and prevent conflicts before they occur. To this end, the council also strives to promote and implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities as well as coordinate continental efforts to combat terrorism. Additionally, the PSC works to develop a common defense policy for the African Union and to promote democratic practices, good governance, and the rule of law while protecting human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the sanctity of human life.

To achieve these objectives, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) has a set of purposes to carry out in order to reach its goals. These functions include promoting peace, security, and stability; early warning systems and conflict prevention; peacemaking through methods such as mediation and conciliation; using peace support operations, if necessary, based on the AU's Constitutive Act; aiding in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts; and engaging in humanitarian relief and managing disasters (AU, 2003).

2.2.1.5 African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is a mechanism that is set to co-ordinate the African Union and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution. Created under the African Union Constitutive Act (2000) and the protocol that relates to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (2002), The African Peace and Security Architecture has a good deal of distinctive structures that work together to address peace and security issues, this includes the Peace and Security Council (PSC), that is mainly responsible for preventing conflicts and providing resolution, AU Commission, the African Standby Force, the Panel of the Wise, the Peace Fund and the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). APSA has become an essential foundation for

interventions on peace and also in security issues within Africa. The Cooperation between Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms is directed by a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on January 28th, 2008 (AU, 2021).

The Four Elements of the APSA

1) Panel of the Wise

The Panel of the Wise (POW) is a vital component of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). According to Article 11 of the Protocol that created the PSC, a team of five distinguished African individuals, who have significantly contributed to promoting peace, security, and progress in different sectors of society, was formed. Their role is to assist both the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission in preventing conflicts (AU, 2021).

2) African Standby Force (ASF)

The Protocol that relates to the establishment of the PSC in 2002, as per article 13(1) and (2) states that the role of the ASF is to aid the PSC in carrying out its responsibility of deploying peace support actions under articles 4(h) and (j) of the African Union Constitutive Act of 2000. The ASF is required to be multivariate and made up of pledged capabilities, including military force, police officer, and civilian components that are ready for rapid deployment from their countries of origin (PSC Protocol (2002), ASF is set mandated by the protocol to perform:

- Missions on observation and monitoring
- Missions on other kinds of peace support or assistance
- Intervening in a member state to resuscitate peace and also security in grave circumstances, or when requested by a state.
- Prevent any form of violent dispute or conflict from getting worse or becoming more serious.
- On Peacebuilding even after the conflict through demilitarization and demobilization
- Humanitarian aid and assistance
- Other tasks mandated by the Peace and Security or African Union Assembly (AU, 2021).

3) Peace Fund

Under the PSC Protocol (2002), Article 21, states that the peace fund is responsible for providing adequate resources specifically financial for missions like peace support/assistance and related operations that are concerning to the peace and security of member states. According to the above protocol, the fund for peace operations and the like been obtained from different channels, which include funding from the regular AU budget, voluntary offerings from member states, international stakeholders, as well as civil society, the private enterprises, and individuals. Fundraising activities are also considered to generate revenue for the Peace Fund. The AUC Chairperson has been authorized to increase and accept contributions that are made voluntarily from sources that are not from Africa, following the African Union's objectives and principles (AU, 2021).

4) The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

According to the PSC Protocol (Article 12), the CEWS was created as an important element of the APSA. The CEWS aims to foresee and avert conflicts in Africa, in addition to delivering prompt intelligence on evolving violent conflicts premised on specifically developed indicators (AU handbook, 2021). Moreover, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission works on the intelligence that is gathered by CEWS for advising the Peace and Security Council concerning preemptive measures against conflicts (Sharpe, 2012).

This structure within the APSA fulfils the core of the union's conflict prevention, management and resolution mandate with the capacity to monitor, analyze and develop tailored and provides timely recommendation and policy options in regards to threats against peace and security on the continent. According to the Peace and Security Council, the CEWS is comprised of two primary components: The Situation Room of the CEWS is situated within the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security and for the Monitoring and Observation Centers, it is situated in the REC. The hub of CEWS, which is the Situation Room, located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that works around the clock. The primary function of the Situation Room is to observe and also gather information on conflicts in various stages - from underlying tensions to full-blown confrontations - across Africa. It does this to provide relevant and timely information for informed decision-making. Within the African Union the CEWS has a mandate on conflict

prevention and is tasked to assist not only operational but also structural prevention efforts. CEWS is not an end in itself since it is a system tailored to meet the requirements and needs of decision makers (Chairperson of the AU Commission and of the PSC, members of the Panel of the wise and other organs of the AU peace and security department). This job is not only done alone by the CEWS but in collaboration with the RECs, Member states and other stakeholders. It also provides tools as well as technical assistance to member state to either establish or enhance their existing early warning system and national peace institutions. This mandate would help the CEWS of the AU have a wider net of collecting information and make it much easier to form partnership and the implementation of the recommended course of action within member states.

The CEWS developed an early warning module based on clearly defined and political, economic, social, military and humanitarian indicators to analyze develop analysis and recommend appropriate courses of action(Engel & Porto, 2016, pp.140). When discussing where and how information is gathered for the CEWS, the system gathers its information from a variety of different open-sources (such as governmental and intra-governmental actors, international and non-governmental organization, media and academia, AU field missions, liaison offices, RECs/RMs).

The CEWS has three main activities for its operationalization of the system. The first activity focuses on information collection and monitoring where the collection of data focuses on the context and structural information on countries and regions, actor attributes, and on behaviors and events information. Tools like Africa Media Monitor (includes the Africa Brief News page and the News Desk), Africa Reporter, Livemon, Africa Prospects, the Profiles Module, the CEWS portal are used to collect and monitor data. When looking at the Africa Brief it's a tool with a user-customized views which is updated every ten minutes and the gathered information through the Africa Media Monitor will be presented through this news page and top stories that are identified through repeatedly mentioned keywords by statistical procedure will be presented as "breaking news". The NewDesk is composed of the situation room that works on feed analysis, articles selection and notification delivery after that the editors will review and publish the final product and finally the workshop manager would allocate resources, manage users account and give access right (Shewitt & Taye, 2014, pp.157). These two tools are used for online source of information gathering such news outlets through gathering, flittering and

classification of information, aggregation, presentation and visualization, trend detection and distribution of information. The African reporter is an analytical tool that is supported by two basic field report, one being the incident report which is irregular reports that describe the attributed of security related incidents. While the other one is the situation reports that are regular assessments focusing on emerging conditions of conflict or instability within a country. These analytical tools have a built-in analytical capability. With the above tools being used for collecting and analyzing information's the Live Mon is a customized web –based content delivery system through the animation of live news articles on maps to help decision makers to follow current news(Shewitt & Taye, 2014, pp.159). The profile module is a database that provides summary for the AU and the REC's , provide detailed profile information and automated scrapping of profile(ibid, pp.160).

The second activity is conflict and cooperation analysis which is a framework that helps contextualize alerts on early warnings and other types of report. It begins with understanding the structural source of conflict through requiring the cleavage of the tensions that have led or have the potential to lead to conflict. The dynamic analysis then identifies possible aggravating or triggering events that would allow for the situation to develop and also takes into consideration the responses of other international actors (Engel & Porto, 2016, pp.148).

The third and final activity of the CEWS is the policy and response formulation that discusses on developing possible scenarios and actionable options which enables it to come up with recommendations for action to AU decision makers at the top level. Even though this is the last step the collection, monitoring and analysis of information will be still ongoing. When providing response actions it comes along with alternatives scenarios to be avoided, the best/ desired outcomes or continuity of the status quo. Identifying scenarios helps in providing ranges of response options for recommendation on the course of action. These alternatives scenarios will be matched with preliminary outlines of goals and strategies on what kind of activities and whom would contribute the realization of one of the above scenario and then recommendations on the course of actions are based on mandates, instruments and political will. The formulation of the recommendation are based not only from the above tools but also from past experiences and the principle course of action detailed in the peace and security council (Engel & Porto, 2016, pp.150).

As it was mentioned on the above paragraph the CEWS doesn't only focus on operational conflict prevention but it also focuses on structural prevention of conflicts. The AU and RECs/RM developed the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework and adopted by the PSC in 2015, seeking to provide conflict prevention at two levels (the Commission for wide coordinated approach and the Member States to support their efforts on structural conflict prevention)(Personal communication with an AU staff member, 2023). The main objective of this framework is to build the capacity of the AU, RECs/RMs and AU member states to identify and address not only emerging conflicts but also the structural and root causes of conflicts in Africa; identifying and strengthening structural stability indicators; and strengthen the coordination and harmonization of the AU role with the RECs, APRM, AfDB and UNDP).

AU handbook (2021) further underscores the pivotal role of the CEWS by explaining the two instruments' CEWS has which are Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies and the Country Structural Vulnerability Resilience Assessment. The goal of these instruments is meant to enhance the capability of the member states in identifying and stifling structural weaknesses during the early stages and bringing up societies that are robust and thriving. This effort or action is also part of the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework by the AU. The Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) which is a process that is requested from a member state and the assessment focuses on the areas such as good governance, security sector, socio-economic development, environment and climate change, gender and youth, transitional justice and reconciliation. The second tool is the Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy Framework (CSVMS) focuses on strategic measures developed by countries that are either medium or long term, complement existing structural mitigation strategies and facilitate coordinated support for the implantation of the mitigation strategies. This framework helps in understanding conflict causes, identified peace and resilience factors, providing context-specific support, mobilizing technical and financial resources for member states. The CEWS doesn't operate alone in realizing each framework it has adopted. It is all done in collaboration with other partners like the RECs hence it is vital to also look into the partnership between this two.

2.2.2 The AU Continental Early Warning System and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (CEWS and RECs/RMs)

Regional integration or regionalism has become a potential solution to development challenges. Regionalism has led to various efforts towards development, such as establishing Free Trade Areas (FTAs), Custom Unions, Economic Communities, and other regional institutions that focus on different areas of society and the economy. According to regionalism theory, communities with close proximity, cultural connections, and shared interests encounter fewer obstacles to their development path. Just as the need for development has arisen, the increase in conflicts has also prompted regional organizations to establish frameworks for promoting peace and security. These measures aim to address and manage conflict and insecurity in different regions.

The integration of a peace and security agenda is based on the understanding that Africa's progress cannot be fully realized without effective solutions to these issues. The Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) were established to achieve peace and security on the continent. The African Union (AU) has been given the mandate to lead conflict prevention efforts through the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), with support from regional blocs. Under the APSA framework, additional mechanisms have been created by regional bodies to complement CEWS's conflict prevention endeavors. Examples of these mechanisms include COMESA's COMWARN, IGAD's CEWARN, ECOWAS' ECOWARN, ECCAS' MARAC, SADC's National Early Warning Centers (NEWCs), and EAC' East African Early Warning System (EACWARN).

The cooperation between these two parties is institutionalized through a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their coordination in their activities to achieve the shared goals. According to the Memorandum, the objective of the cooperation is to contribute to the full operationalization and effective functioning of the APSA, ensure regular exchange of information between all parties involved, fostering closer partnership, develop and implement joint programs and activities, ensure the coordinating mechanisms are consistent with the objective and principle of the AU, external initiative in the field of peace and security takes place within the principle of the AU, build and strength capacity of the parties in areas covered by the memorandum(Memorandum of Understanding, 2008, Article III). These two parties cooperate

in specific areas that are related to maintaining peace, security, and stability in Africa. They cooperate on the operationalization and functioning of the APSA, prevention; management and resolution of conflict; humanitarian actions and disaster response; post-conflict reconstruction and development; arms controls and disarmaments; border management; capacity building, training and knowledge sharing; resource mobilization; counter-terrorism and preventing transnational organized crimes and other areas of shared priorities(Memorandum of Understanding, 2008, Article IV).

The 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the RECs/RMs states the need for adherence to the principle of subsidiarity, complementarily and comparative advantage, in order to optimize the partnership between these parties giving recognition that lower level governance system may enjoy stronger political legitimacy because of their proximity to the citizens. The RECs that are recognized by the AU has a coordination mechanism through the creation of rules, regulations and frameworks for better coordination aside from this the AU holds coordination meetings, representatives(personnel exchange and principles (of subsidiarity, division of labor, and comparative advantage and complementarities)(Magoke & Oke,2023). However when looking at the MoU it narrowly defines APSA to include only the CEWS, the PoW and ASF and details on how the organization will cooperate in information exchange having somewhat a hierarchal setup instead of equal partnership. (Okumu W, 2023)

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The article 12 of the PSC Protocol also provides the initiative for coordination and partnership with academic institutions and research think-tank, international organizations, and NGOs to assist the operation of the CEWS. The plan for putting CEWS into action, which the Executive Council approved in 2007, emphasizes the importance of working with civil society groups and prioritizing conflict preventions for attaining peace, security, and stability in Africa (AU, 2003).

2.2.3 Major Challenges to the Performance of CEWS

Despite initial success in terms of continued decline in the number of and geographical range of conflicts on the continent especially in the first decade of the existence of the African Union and the African Peace and Security Structure (APSA), according to Amani Africa (2022) report, violent conflicts are on the rise in the African continent recently. The factors leading to the increase in the number of conflicts on the continent are summarized by the report as relating to terrorism, political transition, armed conflict, elections and military coups. This is also expressed by the PSC communique of its 1000th session which conveyed grave apprehension regarding the continuing and resurging presence of conflicts and crises engulfing certain regions of the continent.

Violent conflicts are on the rise on the African continent, despite the existence of the African Unions Peace and security architecture specifically with the presence of the continental early warning system which is responsible to collect, predict and anticipate conflicts. In this regard, the APSA and particularly with the role of the CEWS failure in effectively reducing the number

of and geographical spread of conflicts, available literature points out to four broad categories of interrelated challenges

Limited Capacity

The CEWS faced significant resource constraints, particularly in terms of funding and human capacity. This made it difficult to provide real-time alerts and monitor emerging situations across the continent effectively. Resource constraints are not only limited to the CEWS alone, broadly speaking the African Union itself is affected by shortages in financial funding and non-financial constraints. The resource constraint issue is also not unique to the African Union since the same issue also affects the United Nations. The issue of resource constrains needs to be addressed and given the needed attention by the African Union because of two reasons; to prevent humanitarian crisis and it is less costly to fund conflict prevention actions and mechanism than interventions (Sharpe, 2017).

Inadequate Data

The CEWS has also struggled with a lack of timely and accurate data, particularly from countries that were reluctant to share sensitive information with other member states or the AU. In this regard, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that the communication and exchange of information between the AU and RECs have been wildly problematic and plagued with issue of miscommunication. Furthermore, the current lack of information sharing mechanisms among regional organizations is a pressing issue. The absence of an established reporting system from these organizations to the AU risks unnecessary duplication of efforts and squandering of resources by the AU, thereby imperiling the decision-making processes of the early warning system. Furthermore, it has been explicitly stated that the African Union (AU) should not replicate the efforts already achieved by regional organizations regarding the conflict early warning system. This concept aims to maintain the independence of the regional organizations, but at the same time, it has created a significant gap in coordinating the fragmented and uncoordinated activities across the continent (Tiruneh, 2010).

For instance, early warning systems in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) rely more on intelligence, while Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) make it more open and accessible to the public. With the exception of establishing a situation room, most Regional Economic

Communities (RECs) concentrate on different areas and rely on different methods for collecting and reporting information (Tiruneh, 2010).

Structural Issues

Some commentators have put forth the argument that the institutional structure of the African Union (AU) is bureaucratic and sluggish, which could have contributed to delays in implementing early warning systems and responding to budding conflicts. At the heart of this issue is the unresolved matter of subsidiarity between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs). This issue arose from a lack of a shared interpretation of the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU and REC/RMs, causing inconsistent decision-making regarding how to delineate responsibilities among these organizations when resolving conflicts in Africa. The principles of subsidiarity dictate that organizations that are closest to a conflict should dictate the response measures. Nonetheless, this setup has allowed for complacency towards incumbent leaders and has provided room for politically-influenced decisions. For example, countries are given more influence based on their size, chairmanship, or level of agreement with other heads of state and REC/RMs about preferred actions for conflict prevention (Desmidt & Hauck, 2017).

Political Factors

According to Sharpe (2012), the AU's PSC is responsible for passing decisions on conflict resolution and prevention, but its membership is composed of representatives from member states, some of whom may be reluctant to share information relevant to security or intervene in the affairs of other countries due to political or economic considerations. The AU has had varied results when intervening in conflicts that are violent, where in some cases there were small successes but numerous failures in preventing or addressing mass human rights abuses. Furthermore, their suggested solutions often involve providing favorable deals to autocratic leaders accused of committing such abuses. Hence, the willingness of the AU heads of state to deal with abusive political leaders and fund programs to combat these issues depends on their own political interests and moral authority is essential to recognize. Most of the African leaders have used abusive actions to prolong their stay in power and in some cases have even intervened in other states' political affairs, which fuels conflicts and related atrocities. Therefore, the success of the AU in mitigating and addressing conflict depends on good governance from leaders at home, which can then create a foundation for political will to resource and promote good governance elsewhere.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design of the Study

There exists significant literature addressing the obstacles AU's CEWS faces. However, the root cause of the persisting nature of these obstacles have not yet been well documented and exhaustively considered. Due to this particular reason, qualitative research design is employed for this study. Moreover, explanatory research is selected as the methodology which properly addresses the answers to the research questions formulated as it will help with understanding of why the challenges to the CEWS persist over time. The explanatory research design is selected because it facilitates analysis of relevant data and when appropriate better explain attitude of the people that have role in influencing policy and the implementation of the CEWS. The research is designed in such a way that it maintains logical flow and data obtained both from primary and secondary sources are supplementing each other.

3.2 Methods of Data Collection

For the purpose of this thesis, both primary and secondary data sources are used. Four different types of data collection mechanism are utilized to collect both primary and secondary data. For the collection of data the following mechanism were used

- Interviews

The primary data was collected through interviews. Key question will address interviews regarding challenges facing the CEWS. The interview guiding questions were developed for this study with due consideration to the related review of literature and in consideration of the objective of the study and the research questions this study aims to find answers for.

- Open ended Questionnaires

Open ended questionnaire is also a great way of collecting a wealth of qualitative data in social science studies. The value of open-ended questionnaires is in the fact that they give time

for the respondent to think and provide more throughout responses on the topic under study. As a result, open ended questionnaires were used for data collection in this study.

As per the secondary data,

- Literature Reviews

Interviews data is usually not analyzed alone, but are instead used to verify information that has already been gathered from other sources. In this paper the secondary sources on available literature have given the factual basis to this thesis and so it will be the main method of data collection in terms of secondary data.

3.3 Sampling Mechanism

Participants to this study were selected using non-probability sampling mechanism. When using the non- probability sampling, participants are typically selected based on certain non-random criteria, such as quota or convenience (Bhattacharjee, 2012). For the purpose of this study, non-probability sampling was used to carefully select the persons who can provide authoritative data on the study topic. Moreover, among the types of non- probability sampling mechanisms, a mix of expert sampling and snowball sampling was utilized to pick the participants that have a depth of knowledge and exposure to the African Peace and security architecture and specifically with the CEWS. Bhattacharjee (2012), states that expert sampling is a technique where respondents are chosen in a non-random manner based on their expertise on the phenomenon being studied whereas Snowball sampling is a sampling technique in which a small group of individuals who meet the required criteria for inclusion in a study are identified and then asked to refer others who fit the same criteria.

The participants who were selected for this study were from three categories; the first category of participants were officials working on at the African Union specifically within the Peace and security department (5 participants), the second category of participants selected were from academic scholars within the field of peace and security particularly with vested interest in continental early warning systems and conflict Prevention (3 participants). The third and final category of participants were selected from experts working in civil society organizations and from scholars of the field (2 participants) particularly those working on the issue of prevention.

The data obtained from these categories of participants and the above-mentioned data collection mechanisms was analyzed in triangulation to look for any patterns of agreements and discrepancies which helped in better understanding the reasons and mechanisms in which the CEWS is failing and generate attainable recommendations for the better performance of the CEWS.

3.4 Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

The qualitative data collected for this study using interviews and open-ended questionnaires was first be transcribed into separate documents before analyzed. The transcription of data obtained helped in simplifying the process of looking for thematic patterns and categories of data; subsequently the transcribed data was analyzed with the qualitative analysis method of narrative analysis since the study's objective was to unveil the challenges of the CEWS from data obtained from the participants. Narrative analysis refers to a method of examining the various accounts or stories that people construct. According to Intellspot (2023), this approach to qualitative data analysis, helps in understanding the past and produce meanings of it. It also, helps in organizing information about how humans interpret events and show us the values and beliefs that guide those interpretations.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

The researcher has upheld different ethical considerations for this study. The first is that all sources used in this research were properly credited to the original authors and publishing organizations using APA style 7th edition. Moreover, the researcher has made sure no harm was faced by the participants of the study as a result of their participation in this study and as a result of the data they provided for the purpose of this study; the researcher has also made sure all information provided was kept confidential. All the data provided by the participants during the data collection was kept on a password protected computer and was never shared with anyone. Furthermore, the participants of the study are not identified by name in this research report that is submitted for the Institute for Peace and Security Studies. In doing so the researcher has guaranteed the anonymity of the identity of the participants and the confidentiality of the information they provided. Lastly, during the data collection phases it was made clear for the

participants that they have the right to not answer questions that they do not feel comfortable providing answer for and that they have the right to discontinue their participation in the study at any given time.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Sources of Data and Participants

The three objectives of this study were: To determine the reason for the persistency of the challenges of the AU's Continental Early Warning System; To identify the internal and external dynamics that influence the effective implementation and functioning to AU's Continental Early Warning System and to provide appropriate recommendations that would help address the obstacles that stand against the effectiveness of the CEWS objective. To these end qualitative data was obtained from experts in the areas through interviews and open ended questionnaires.

A total of 10 people have participated in this study, 6 of which were either directly working with the African Union or working within the CEWS in particular; two of the participants were from one of the RECs based in Addis Ababa which is IGAD. These participants worked with in IGAD-CEWARN. The remaining was from the Institute for strategic studies and Addis Ababa which are professionals in the field of security, diplomacy and international relations. Five open ended questionnaires were filled out and five interviews were conducted, three in person and two via video conferencing (See Annex).

4.2 Major Findings

4.2.1 African Unions Achievements in terms of Conflict Prevention

The study has found that participants, all 10 of the respondents view the achievements of the African Union in terms of conflict prevention positively in comparison to its predecessor the OAU. They have reported that in terms of conflicts prevention the African Union has a better track record than the OAU. However, all 10 of them have also has responded that the AU has fallen short of its intended objective to herald a new era of peace on the continent.

4.2.2 Major Challenges to the CEWS

This study has found based on the responses of the participants that the number one reason for the underperformance of the CEWS the lack of early response. The data indicates that this factor is mentioned by all key informants except for the key informant from Research and

Training in IGAD-CEWARN times. The second most reported reason for the underperformance of the CEWS is the issue of lack of funding which was reported by eight key informants except for key informant in the research and training in IGAD-CEWARN and the director of the institute of the horn. Other reasons, reported for the underperformance of the system are; human resource constraints by the Director of IGAD-CEWARN, Senior Technical Member of the CEWS at the AU, Situation Room Coordinator at the AU, Former Humanitarian, Peace and Security advisor UNAID liaison office to AU and UNECA, Director of the Institute of the Horn(Institute for Strategic Studies), Assistant Professor at Addis Ababa University Center of Africa and Asia Studies, Peace and Security Director at Ethiopia's Permanent Mission to the AU, Deputy Permanent Representative both at AU Directorate General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs the view that the African Union is weak and Bureaucratic Institution (5) times by Key Informants working in the IGAD-CEWARN, CEWS at the AU as senior technical, peace and security advisor, professor in Addis Ababa, the institute of the horn, Unclear and Overlapping Responsibilities between the AU and RECs (6 times) by Key Informants except for research and trainer, director, assistant professor and communication and advocacy consultant (See Annex) and organizational inefficiencies and Restructuring (4 times) by the senior technical member, situation room coordinator, peace and security advisor, peace and security director (See Annex)

4.2.3 Reasons for the Persistence of the Challenges

When asked why the challenges to the continental early warning system have persisted over the past two decades, participants have reported that lack of political will by the official at the African Union has was reported 10 times by the respondents. The second most reported response by the participants to this is the issue of lack of funding which was reported 7 times however the research and trainer, and assistant professor at Addis Ababa didn't share the views of the other seven key informants.

4.2.4 Internal Factors and External Factors

The data collected has indicate that the respondents overwhelmingly believe that the African Unions internal problems are the main factors affecting the performance of the CEWS. Although external factors have been mention; all participants have given have significance to the internal factors. With regards to the external factors only two factors were reported, the first external factor identified was the influence that comes from international donor in relation to

external funding that limit and undermines the African Unions decision making capacity. This external factor was mentioned by the participants 6 times in the data collected appeared correlation with the issue lack of and source of funding¹. The second external factor identified was the unwillingness (lack of cooperation) to by the RECs due to unclear and overlapping responsibilities. This external factor was reported 4 times in the data collected².

On the contrary, the data collected has identified several internal factors with a total of 36 mentions; lack of appropriate funding reported 8 times³, qualified personnel and human resources issues reported 6 times⁴, organizational inefficiencies reported 4 times⁵, a weak institution in the form of the African union reported 5 times⁶, lack of early response to warnings and recommendations for course of actions was reported by key informants 9 times⁷ and the recent organizational restructuring was reported 4 times⁸.

¹ K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.9 & K.I.10; See Annex

² K.I.1, K.I.2, K.I.3 & K.I.9; See Annex

³ K.I.2, K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.7, K.I.8 & K.I.10; See Annex

⁴ K.I.2, K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.8, K.I.9; See Annex

⁵ K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.8; See Annex

⁶ K.I.2, K.I.3 K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.7; See Annex

⁷ K.I.2, K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.7, K.I.8, K.I.9 & K.I.10; See Annex

⁸ K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.8; See Annex

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Conflict Prevention at the African Union

The responses of the participants used for this thesis in regards to the achievement of the African Union concerning conflicts prevention as compared to its predecessor; The OAU is largely in favor of the AU. One the topic of conflict prevention, the responses from participants unanimously acknowledged that the African Union has had recognizable achievements in terms of conflict prevention.

The views expressed in the responses highlight the historical underpinnings of what inherently makes the African union perform better in conflict prevention which is the fact that when Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed, the problem confronting African continent then was colonialism. Thus the main objective by that time was to be a vehicle for Pan-African solidarity at a time of struggle for liberation. After independence, Africa witnessed a significant increase in conflict across various countries, with ethnicity, religious differences, and struggles for political control among the contributing factors. This surge of conflict, combined with the non-intervention policy of the OAU regarding domestic affairs of member states, caused the African continent to be seen as one of the most unstable regions in the world. Due to these and other reasons the African leadership recognized the need for change, which paved the way to reform the OAU. As a result, a multi-issue-focused organization, the AU materialized.

While the OAU had given top priority to assisting liberation movements for countries under colonialism, the AU made a decision to solely focus on taking a lead role in fostering African development and integration in the continent. The AU also gave itself with the right for militarily intervention in member states during conditions that are crimes against humanity. The organization has conducted peacekeeping missions on several cases in pursuit of its goal to fostering African development and integration.

To mention some, responses underscored that the AU efforts helped avert tragedies that protected people from violence in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Darfur, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Mali. The AU's peace diplomacy missions have also resulted

in achievement on numerous occasions as well. The AU led peace process in South Africa (the Pretoria accord) that resulted in a peace deal between the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front is one to be mentioned.

According to the participants that were involved in this study, through their answer it can be perceived that the AU has a better mechanism to conflict prevention than the OAU. This is largely due to the African Union's legal framework that at least in principle which enables it to intervene in member states to prevent conflicts. Moreover, beyond the existence principle on non-indifference and the establishment of an overall strategy for peace and security in the form of the African peace and security architecture (APSA) has shown a commitment for conflict prevention.

Furthermore, participant have indicated that this comparison in terms of conflict prevention must be seen in relative terms. The first thing to be considered is that the time these organizations have existed, as such the African Union could be considered to have a better track record in conflict prevention than the OAU. Secondly, the African union could be considered to be a reformed version of the OAU that was established to fill the gaps within the founding principles, legal frameworks and executive capacity of the OAU. However; participants of the study have also indicated that despite this view that the African Union is a reformed version of its predecessor, it doesn't mean considerable achievements in the field of conflict prevention has been made possible.

The African Union has an arrangement called APSA to resolve conflicts, and it has various structures to fulfill its mission. It has developed significant institutional capacity undertake early warning analysis and conflict prevention. These include the Panel of the Wise, Special Envoys, the Continental Early Warning System, and ad hoc mediation committees, frequently made up of current and former Heads of State. The Commission has concentrated on operational conflict prevention through the production of early warning reports, carrying out diplomatic missions aimed at preventing conflicts in Member States, which are at risk of violent conflict, as well as frequently update the AUPSC on possible dangers and Horizon Scanning reports that develop reports on peace and also security issues in the continent.

To sum up, the activities that done by the commission in anticipating and preventing conflicts on the continent are promising moves in supporting the commission on conflict prevention. Through

the establishment of the Situation Room, CEWS tools for data collection and analysis (i.e. Africa Media Monitor, Africa News Brief, CEWS Portal, Event Detection, Extraction and Moderation system and Coordination and Collaboration with the RECs) are mechanisms that show hope.

However, participants also stress on the fact that on the ground, the African Union's achievements in terms of conflict prevention could only be characterized as hit and miss at best. During the lifetime of the union, participants of the study believed that the African Union should have done more to reduce the conflicts on the continent in terms of both the number of and geographical spread of violent conflicts especially emphasizing on the founding objective of the union, which was the need for a new organization with better mechanism to prevent and manage conflicts.

In conclusion, taking in to account the distinctions between the objective and the operational time of the two organizations, AU as largest continental organ, part of the international peace building system, making a significant contribution to peace in Africa it can be considered that the AU is up to the mark to establish and sustain peace in the continent comparing to its predecessor. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that the performance of the AU specifically the peace and security sphere has been challenged for its limitation for not performing as expected.

5.2 Factors affecting the performance of the CEWS

It was one of the guiding objectives of this study to discover what factors are affecting the performance of the CEWS. Moreover, the study sought to identify which factors could be attributed as internal factors and which are external factors. The study has identified a number of factors to be challenges and bottlenecks to the performance of the CEWS. The study has also found that these factors are an interrelated web of issues rather than a standalone problem in most cases. The factors affecting the performance of the CEWS are most times issues that also affect other organs of the African union and the union itself. Thus, it would be wrongful to just conceptualize these issues as a separate occurrence rather than in a system of problems that relate with each other as a feedback loop which renders not just conflict prevention endeavor but also the effective operation of the African Union sluggish, bureaucratic, inefficient and unsuccessful.

This study based on the data collected from participants have made two key findings that are unique to this study. The first unique finding is that the emphasis participants have given to

the issue of lack of early response based on early warning. Although broader literature on early warning systems have indicated that early response and action based on the information obtained through EWS is crucial to the effectiveness of early warning systems; in the CEWS context; prior studies have not identified this factor as a major challenge. In fact, prior studies have identified the lack of actionable information is the t problem. This study, however has discovered this factor to be of paramount significance. Participants believe that the continental early warning system provides, quality and actionable data and claim that the problem arises from lack of action and not information.

The other unique discovery this study has made is with regards to the issue of funding. Although, several studies have indicated the lack of funding to be a persistent problem affecting the CEWS; they have not discussed the source of funding to the system as a problem. In this study, participants have provided significant insight into how the sources of funding to the CEWS are also a source challenging problem. The CEWS, has struggle with the shortage of funding for a very long time and even when funds have been available to the CEWS; donor partners who avail said funds have come with strings attached that influences the decision-making process. The funds that come from European and Western nations under the APSA; have been accompanied with political agendas that complicate the work of the CEWS and the AU at large. According to the Director of the Institute of the Horn, such problematical and politically motivated sources of funding have often times made the African Union unable to implement the *African solutions to African Problems Agenda*.

5.3 Internal and External Factors Affecting the Performance of the CEWS

This study has discovered that the internal factors far outweigh the external factors. When asked on the internal and external classifications of factors that are affecting the performance of the CEWS, participants have largely identified internal problems to be the major factors affecting the organization. The internal factors identified by this study include the lack of appropriate funding, qualified personnel and human resources issues, organizational inefficiencies, a weak institution in the form of the African union, lack of political will to take action and the recent organizational restructuring. In contrast, with regards to external factors, this study has identified influence of western powers which follows the source of funding and lack of

cooperation with regional organizations as the main external factors. These factors are discussed in the following part of this chapter.

5.3.1 Early Warning and Early Response Gap

This thesis identified one of the major reasons for the underperformance of the CEWS over the past two decades, which has been the gap between early warning reports on possibility violent conflicts and early response to these reports. It is widely accepted by the experts and scholars in the field of peace and security that for any preventive measure to succeed there is a need for quick response and action on the information gathered by the early warning system. Asserting the above claim; the United Nations developed The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) outlining four key components of an effective early warning system. The first component involves gathering information from a variety of sources and preparing potential mitigation options. The second component is monitoring and predicting, which involves monitoring situations in different contexts and making predictions that can form the basis of intervention, either immediately or over a longer time frame. The third element focuses on timely and reliable dissemination of actionable information. It is essential to make sure that the message is easily comprehensible, succinct, and straightforward. Finally, the fourth component focuses on response from all relevant actors in the situation. A swift and synchronized response is vital for an active and functional early warning system (UN, 2006).

In the case of the African union, early warning is often times not accompanied by early action to respond to conflicts. Although, further investigation to the reasons why early warning is not accompanied by early response is needed, according to the data gathered for this study, Key Informants have indicated that limited funding for on the ground operations, political factors and bureaucratic bottlenecks are indicated as reasons for the problem⁹. With this particular challenge, the early warning system of the African Union has fallen for the very same problem outlined two decades ago; the theory- practice gap of early warning systems has been identified by George &Holl (1997). In their analysis of the gap between warning and action; they stated that this gap that is missing is a very critical aspect of the early warning system, however; they claimed that while early warning systems can assist in mitigating risks during the decision-making process,

⁹ K.I.2, K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.7, K.I.8, K.I.9, K.I.10, See Annex

their ability to prompt action is restricted. It is further contended that this shortfall is often due to political reluctance towards taking action, even when presented with thorough and persuasive evidence of increased implications of organized violence.

This study has also discovered that the participants, experts and scholars in the field of peace and security at large and in the field of early warning systems believed that this gap that exists between early warning and early response is a serious problem hampering the prevention of conflicts that the African union has set out to prevent¹⁰. They stated that in a similar manner to the available literature on the topic that the problem arises mainly from limited political will to take action. Despite funding shortages, and human resource issues the union is plagued with even when actionable information is gathered by the early response system actions are not taken because of politics at the higher stages of the ladder at the African Union.

5.3.2 Lack of and Sources Funding

The data collected for this study indicates that the issue of funding is a major challenge to the performance of the CEWS. This finding is also in line with the vast amount of literature available on the matter and which has partly been covered in the second chapter of this report. When discussing the problem of funding, participants with the exception of just a single participant all believed that it is a major factor affecting the CEWS. The problem of limited funding is not a unique problem to the CEWS; in fact, the African Union at large is plagued with this very issue. It is also not a unique problem to the African Union as well; even the United Nations struggles with a lack of funding at times. On this particular topic, the senior technical member of the CEWS at the AU states “It is fair to mention also CEWS is victim of the financial constraint the commission faces at large for it is not immune to this problem. As it is widely known AU faces financial deficit to run specially AU mandated peace keeping missions which drive the commission to rely on donors and foreign financial assistances including its annual budget.”

However, what exacerbates the issue of funding in the context of the African Union and CEWS in particular is not just the limited availability of funds to carry out its duties but also in the ways these funds have been acquired. The African Union is largely funded by a handful of member state contributions with a sizable lump sum of its budget acquired from international

¹⁰ K.I.2, K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.7, K.I.8, K.I.9, K.I.10, See Annex

donors such as the its European counterpart, western nations and non-governmental organizations. Here is where the problem emerges; with the historical backdrop of the continent this appears to be problematic because it leaves little room for the union to dictate the appropriation of the funds as it sees fit or to the most challenging and pressing issues on the continent. According to the participants the union has been struggling with this issue for a very long time. In one particular example a participant claimed that it is funding issues and complacency to the demands of donors and benefactors such as this one that has made the PSC unable to discuss the political and security problem in Cameroon.

In a recent article published by Auge and Djilo (2021), similar anxieties regarding the African Union's budget have been expressed, especially since the reforms advocated in the Kagame report have begun to be implemented. Although the donors' share in the African Union's budget has reduced from 73% in 2017 to about 60%, with percentages of 58.53% in 2018, 58.90% in 2019, and 61% in 2020; a more thorough examination of the budget discloses a more intricate reality where the African Union's member states are now fully responsible for funding the organization's operating budget. Furthermore, in the program budget, the percentage of external donor contribution has decreased from 85% in 2017 to 62% in 2018, 55% in 2019, and 59% in 2020. It is imperative to note that the African Union's budget has also reduced by 17% since 2017 due to increased efforts to streamline expenditures. However, the organization remains reliant on external donors for peacekeeping responsibilities, with between 97%-100% of funding still coming from these donors. These funding levels raise concerns about the African Union's commitment to peacekeeping operations, especially given the insufficient resources, and whether alternative and less expensive conflict prevention measures are being disregarded as a consequence.

5.3.3 Human Resource, Material and Personnel Issues

The other factor this study has discovered to be affecting the performance of the CEWS is lack of well-rounded, equipped man power who understands the problems the continent is facing on the ground coupled with deficit in pragmatism of the leadership is the main bottleneck to the performance of the CEWS. For instance, according to information obtained from, the director of IGAD-CEWARN and the former humanitarian, peace and security advisor UNAID liaison office to AU and UNECA stated that the internal assessment conducted by the AU itself

reveals that the CEWS as well as the PSC suffers from limited personnel and weak bureaucratic processes. This factor, as participants understand is also closely related with the issue of lack of funding.

This vicious cycle of lack of funding causing lack of equipped, expertly trained personnel on conflict prevention and Early warning systems has been a longstanding problem at the African Union. This issue has made the African Union lag behind in terms of qualified staff when compared to RECs such as ECOWAS and SADC. Key informants generally stated that even though there have been some advancements in implementing the CEWS, the limited capabilities of the AU situation room, including insufficient staff expertise, materials, and technical equipment, still prevent the system from being fully effective as it aspires to be¹¹. Such limited capacity negatively impacts the analysis of collected data and subsequently affects the drafting of concrete recommendations for action.

Even before the full operationalization of the CEWS, (Fisher et al., 2010) had indicated the extent of issue of lack of human resources. As outlined in chapter two of this research report, the Situation Room has the mandate to observe situations that have possibility to change to violent conflict, active conflicts, and post-conflict settings in Africa. It plays a crucial role in the early warning process. In spite of this pivotal role of the situation room, in 2010, there were 10 Situation Room Assistants working on a 24 / 7 shift basis. As the number of staff was not adequate to cover all regions in Africa, additional staff was required. At the time, lack of staff was detected within the early warning systems of the RECs. External project transitions and funding cycles have had a negative impact on recruitment in general. This is in agreement with the findings of this study in which the problem of proper recruitment and lack of qualified staff has still proved to be one of the major challenges to the early warning systems operations.

5.3.4 Weak and Bureaucratic Institution

Another thematic pattern that emerges from the data collected is that the African Union is a weak institution despite having the framework to intervene in member states to prevent a conflict this has proven difficult at many instances to actually make a reality. According to the senior technical member of the CEWS at the AU and former humanitarian, peace and security advisor UNAID liaison office to AU and UNECA who have worked closely with the CEWS,

¹¹ K.I.3, K.I.4, K.I.5, K.I.6, K.I.8 & K.I.9; See Annex

argue that even when actionable information and recommendation for action is presented to the PSC member states have often times moved quickly to block any action that could be taken. The case of the conflict in Burundi when the African Union peace and Security Council has made a decision based on article 4h for a military intervention is a very good example in this regard. This particular instance, the above key informants have indicated is the clear indication of how the AU is a weak institution that couldn't do anything about a member states refusal for intervention and subsequently reversal of the decision which is widely believed to have set a precedence with regards to member states undermining the mandate of the AU.

As per Auge and Djilo's (2021) findings, it is recommended that the PSC has overlooked multiple crises in the past due to lobbying and the influence of certain key states in Addis Ababa. These instances, exemplified by the Tigray crisis, the conflict in the English-speaking areas in Cameroon, and the state of affairs in northern Mozambique, indicate Member States' reluctance to intervene. The African Union's consensus on managing crises primarily relies on the preferences of neighboring countries and affected countries, irrespective of the crises' severity and repercussions on the neighboring regions. Notably, the PSC did not convene any meetings regarding the Tigray crisis until November 8, 2021, nearly a year after its inception.

Furthermore, there have been proven instances where the possibility for intervention has not even been set as an agenda at the PSC even when conflicts have been going on for a very long time. These instances include the case of Cameroon and that of the Central African Republic. Even when the reason for and drivers of conflict across the continent are known such as holding power by politicians beyond their limit, even when these information of authoritarianism have been public knowledge the African Union has been a bystander. This inaction and weakness of the union has created a widely accepted view of the organizations as sort of a toothless organization.

In addition, beyond member states the refusal to cooperate with the decisions of the union or their swift move to curtail any measure that is rightfully mandated by the AU constructive act to the union and its departments such as the PSC. The regional economic commissions have been playing a key role in undreaming the power and influence of the African Union.

According to Auge&Djilo (2021), there are numerous recent examples that illustrate how the African Union's approach towards unconstitutional changes of government has been impacted by regional organizations. The first example pertains to Chad, where the son of the late

Idriss Déby was able to assume presidency following an unconstitutional accession without Chad's suspension, due to the lobbying efforts of neighboring countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria. This situation is in contrast with what occurred in Mali, where the country was suspended from the AU after the overthrow of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in August 2020 due to the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) strict stance towards coups d'état. The second example pertains to Guinea where a coup d'état led to its suspension from both AU and ECOWAS in September 2021. The different approaches taken in these examples demonstrate how the African Union's bodies are increasingly aligned with regional organizations' preferences through the involvement of member countries from these areas on the Peace and Security Council.

5.3.5 Unclear and Overlapping Responsibilities between the AU and RECs

To effectively prevent conflicts and maintain peace and stability in member states, it is essential to coordinate with other international actors that share this mandate, particularly regional economic communities. To this end, the African Union has established a legal basis for cooperation with the RECs through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU has improved the functioning of the Conflict Early Warning Systems (CEWS) and increased cooperation between the AU and other regional early-warning and response mechanisms.

However, the wording of the MOU lacks specificity regarding conflict situations and information sharing, making it challenging to implement. Consequently, cooperation between the AU and RECs has suffered, with RECs frequently bypassing the African Union in responding to conflicts through their own early warning and early response systems. It is necessary to revise the MOU to avoid contradictory policies and enhance effectiveness. The AU and RECs should follow clear sequencing of activities to ensure consistency in their actions.

Considering the different levels of collaboration between the AU and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in addressing unconstitutional changes of government in West Africa, revising the MOU is critical for improved collaboration. The AU should defer to RECs based on the principle of subsidiarity, followed by collaboration with the international community if necessary. This approach would reinforce information sharing mechanisms, limit contradictory policies, and apply sustained pressure on countries that violate norms.

As an illustration, SAMIM was recently deployed by SADC as a regional response to the increasing threat of terrorist and extremist violence in Mozambique, operating under the African Standby Force framework. Operational briefings on Peace missions mandated by the AU indicate a noticeable reluctance or gap in information sharing between SADC and the AU. Prior coordination and consultation were not executed. As a result, the issue of strengthening collaboration and coordination between SADC and AU regarding SAMIM, particularly in regards to information sharing and mission updates, is currently under consideration. The 870th edition of the PSC's session and the second annual consultative meeting involving RECs/RMs further emphasized that there is an urgent need for extensive collaboration and information sharing between the AU and RECs/RMs throughout all stages of conflict.

5.3.6 Organizational Inefficiencies and Restructuring

The role of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) in monitoring and addressing violent conflicts in the African continent is critical for keeping the continent integrated and reducing humanitarian crisis. CEWS was established by the African Union (AU) in 2002 to anticipate and prevent conflicts in the continent as a means to detect, prevent, and respond to conflicts and crises across the continent in a timely and effective manner.

However, it is important to note the continental early warning system in the structure it existed since 2012 has been discarded. Because of the recommendations put forward in the Kagame Report, which was requested by the AU assembly of heads of state and government. The warning system's functions have been incorporated across the new portfolio department that is the department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security. In the backdrop of the rise of violent conflicts in Africa, the new architecture of the CEWS was believed to be more proactive in its efforts to monitor and report on early warning signs. This comprises the role of gathering and analyzing relevant data, such as ethnic, religious, demographic, economic, geopolitical, and political factors, to identify potential flashpoints.

In reality however and based on the accounts of respondents this new restructuring and new organizational structure has rendered the CEWS obsolete. All participants in this study believe that the recent rise of violent conflicts on the continent can be attributed to the dismantling of the CEWS. This is also supported by data from Uppsala conflict database (2021) and also by the independent think tank Amani Africa's (2021) observation of rising number of

conflicts on the continent. Although further correlational studies are needed to determine that these events are indeed related informants to this study certain believe this is the case.

Above and beyond, while it was argued that the new portfolio department would incorporate the functions of an early warning system, it is no longer able to perform its primary operations such as coordinating and harmonizing with regional economic communities and aiding member states in conflict analysis and mitigation, already adding fuel to the fire which the already existing problem of lack of communication between the African Union and the RECs.

5.4 Reasons for the Persistence of Factors affecting the CEWS

The factors identified by this study to have been affecting CEWS are not new. These factors negatively affecting the CEWS have been there since the inauguration of the department. This study has also rediscovered the factors affecting the performance of the CEWS have remained more or less the same over the years. Thus, it begs the question that why these problems seem to have persisted for so long. For this, participants have indicated funding issues and political will as the two main reason for the persistence of the problem.

The issue of funding has not only affected the CEWS; financial constraints have happened the African Union's capabilities to achieve its goals in almost every department. For instance, an independent scholar who participated in this study says that the situation room of the CEWS is only 40% staffed. Nevertheless; when discussing the issue of financial constraints, it would be problematic to only consider lack and shortage of funds but also the influences behind the available funds that the African union can utilize. Currently, the annual budget of the African union is above 600 million dollars of which more than 70% of it is coming from European Union. This has made the union complacent to the demands and directions of its benefactors.

The aforementioned notion of complacency leads to the second major reason why the CEWS and the African union at large has been limited in its capacity to preventing conflicts even when it is mandated to do so. Mandates and legal frameworks aside, decision makers at the highest level of the organization such as the PSC have shown reluctance to take a step in the right direction and take action to prevent conflicts based on information obtained from the CEWS. This has been seen many times repeated times by the inaction of decision makers in time of conflict which have cost many lives and destruction of economies at a large scale.

CHAPTER SIX

6. RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Recommendations for Better performance of the CEWS

The Continental Early Warning System has a huge role to play in enabling the prediction and prevention of violent conflicts in Africa when going forward. There are four important key pillars with regard to consolidating and increasing the performance of the CEWS. The four key recommendations based on the findings from this study are:

- It is important to fully empower and strengthen the observation and monitoring capacity of the Unit or the Situation Room with regard to information monitoring, collection, and coordination among all key actors. Hence, the AU CEWS should enhance its capacity through fortifying its partnership with various stakeholders, mainly the Early Warning Systems of the RECs, which are an important part of the CEWS.
- It is essential to strengthen the performance of the CEWS in order for it to present a unified analysis of conflict and cooperation for the observation and monitoring units of the RCS for early conflict prevention, management and resolution of violent conflict. The CEWS has to work towards providing reports, collection and analysis of information that are timely, accurate, and dependable to forecast potential threats and insure the stability of the continent.
- The third critical part is that the Chairperson of the AUC and the Peace and Security Council key decision-makers at the AU provide a proactively coordinate the proper, organized, integrated and unified formulation of response options. The commission should attempt to draft new strategies that could effectively address the root cause of the conflicts in Africa as to reduce the occurrences of conflict and provide a solution for the long term.
- The final critical issue is the matter of financing the CEWS. It is not only necessary but an absolute imperative for the African Union to address logistical, bureaucratic, and financial frailties. As mentioned earlier in this discussion, the lack of self-reliance and an over-reliance on external funding has been a major obstacle to the success of the AU. The new peace mission financing decision may allocate 75% from the international community and 25% b to be financed by AU, it does not effectively address the current funding challenge faced. It is vital not only to

secure adequate funding from African countries but also to provide training and build capacity for staff members.

In conclusion, the CEWS plays a vital role in predicting, identifying and addressing violent conflicts in the African continent before the outbreak, and its success solely requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including the African Union executive branches, governments, civil society, and individuals. In addition, the CEWS needs to improve its coordination and collaboration with national and regional early warning systems to share information, expertise, and best practices. This will help in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the system in preventing and managing conflicts and averting humanitarian crisis.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This research has answered some very important questions concerning the challenges of the continental early warning and why these challenges explored by many scholarly literatures over the past two decades have persisted. The challenges that have been discussed in the previous parts of this study report and in no means an exhaustive list of challenges. More, importantly due to the scope and delimitation of the study; some important questions with regards to the continental early warning system remain an answer. Based on the data obtained from participants in this study, some thematic areas are apparent for further exploration, thus the researcher makes the following recommendations for further research.

Firstly, the CEWS performance under the new structure as per the Kagame report needs to be researched to understand the true impact of the reform and its implication for conflict prevention. This study has partly discussed the challenges facing the continental early warning system as a result of the new organizational set up; however, this is not enough since the reforms have only materialized since 2021. The impact of restructuring the CEWS under the new department for Political, peace and Security affairs need to be studied in depth to understand the possible repercussion it would have on conflict prevention on the African continent. Subsequently, the discontinuation of the CEWS as it previously existed has raised some concerns including with the participants¹² of this study, however little information is available whether this had truly contributed to the rise of conflicts in Africa. Although, there have been a growth in the

¹² (K.I.1, K.I.2, K.I.4, K.I.5; See Annex)

number of violent and large-scale conflicts since the reform came to be; it is yet to be well studied if said reform has contributed to this rise in conflicts.

Secondly, the studies on how to properly fund and staff the early warning mechanism needs to be studied in depth as it is one of the lingering issues. The calls for action research at a large scale to come up with a better plan to solve both the financial and human capital constraints of the African Union and the early warning and early response mechanism. It is widely believed that conflict prevention is less costly than other strategies; however, the cost of not funding the preventive measure in the form of early warning and early response properly and adequately has costed dearly across the continent.

Lastly, research needs to be conducted on improving the relationship and cooperation between the African Union and regional economic commission especially as it relates to conflict prevention. Such research might focus on how to efficiently divide responsibilities based on comparative advantage and facilitate the flow of information between the various RECs and the African union.

6.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the CEWS has struggled to achieve its objective of preventing conflicts on the African continent ever since the establishment in early 2000s and its full operationalization in 2012. The challenges to its performance have been persistent and complex. Both literature on early warning system in general and the CEWS of the AU in particular and findings of this study show that the early warning systems work to provide timely information, policy suggestions and a plan for action for the relevant organizations. However, for this to happen a recognition of the importance of such systems is needed. In the case of the CEWS, the system has come and gone without truly serving its purpose.

The CEWS has suffered from lack of appropriate funding, human resources, lack of early action and response, lack of political will and organizational inefficiencies. Despite these challenges having existed from the start of the CEWS, they have persisted throughout its lifetime. The Kagame report reform on the coming together of the two departments of the political affairs and peace and security would have an implication on CEWS. This structural change has been very alarming for scholars, experts in areas like diplomacy, international

relations and security, especially with the rise of violent conflicts across the continent. It is important to note that the current structure of the new Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security has a limited capacity and organization framework to fulfill the early warning mandate of the Peace and Security Council Protocol. There should be a critical and robust rethinking with regard to the role and capacity of the existing early warning systems, functions and practices at the regional and continental level. It is important provide a new impetus, energy and political commitment at the AU level to re-organize in an effective, systematic and efficient manner.

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Annexes

Interview Guides

Part One Consent

The information to be gathered hereafter is to be solely used for academic purposes. The topic of the study; Assessment of the AU's Challenge on the Operationalization of The Continental Early Warning System: Internal and External Factors. The study is conducted as part of the requirements of a Masters of Arts degree in Peace and Security Studies from the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University. As such, the researcher is governed by the principles of academic research and by the ethical guidelines of the institution the final research paper is to be submitted to. To this end, the information collected by the researcher using this interview will be kept confidential. Moreover, the identity of the participants will also be kept anonymously. Respondents will not be required to provide personal detail such as name and address. Instead, the research will recognize the participants with codes assigned to each respondent of the study and these codes will not be transferred to a third party.

Participants hold the right to refuse to answer any questions that they are not comfortable sharing the information with and will also reserve full right to discontinue their participation in the interview at any given point during the interview session. Respondents also have the right to request the final result of the study to be shared with them.

Part Two Guide Questions

Guiding Questions for Interview and Focus Group Discussion

1. In Your Personal Opinion, do you think the African Union has had a better achievement in Conflict Prevention than its predecessor?
2. How do you assess the achievements of the African Union in terms of Conflict prevention?
3. How do you see the use of Early Warning System as a mechanism for conflict Prevention?
4. What do you believe are the challenges to the performance of the CEWS?

5. Studies have indicated that, political will, lack of funding, human resource shortages and organizational factors, as some of the factors for the effectiveness of the CEWS; How do you assess the findings of these studies?
6. On the Relationship between AU and RECs with regards to information sharing as it relates to the continental early warning system, do you observe any gaps in smooth communication? and if so, explain How?
7. What are the internal factors affecting the function of CEWS?
8. What are the external factors affecting the function of the CEWS?
9. Recent reports have indicated that violent conflicts are on the rise in the African Continent; what would be the role of CEWS going forward?
10. What are your recommendations for the improvements of the performance of the CEWS?
11. Do you see any alternatives to the use of CEWS as a Mechanism of Conflict Prevention?

Key Informant References

No.	Key Informant Code	Position
1.	K.I.1	Research and Training in IGAD-CEWARN
2.	K.I.2	Director of IGAD-CEWARN
3.	K.I.3	Senior Technical Member of the CEWS at the AU
4.	K.I.4	Situation Room Coordinator at the AU
5.	K.I.5	Former Humanitarian, Peace and Security Advisor UNAID Liaison office to AU and UNECA
6.	K.I.6	Director of the Institute of the Horn(Institute for Strategic Studies)
7.	K.I.7	Assistant Professor at Addis Ababa University Center of Africa and Asia Studies
8.	K.I.8	Peace and Security Director at Ethiopia's Permanent Mission to the AU
9.	K.I.9	Deputy Permanent Representative both at AU Directorate General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
10.	K.I.10	Communications & Advocacy Consultant at African Union Commission, Office of the Special Envoy for Women Peace and Security

Declaration

The undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree at any other University, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Gebrial Hilawe

Signature _____ Date _____

This thesis is submitted for examination with my approval as an advisor of the candidate

Ahmed Hassen (PhD)

Signature _____ Date _____