

Providing strategic support to the AU and AFRIPOL

Supporting the AU build up police capacities for Peace Support Operations and transnational organised crime

What is the initial situation?

The rapid political changes in some African countries have contributed to the territorial expansion of criminal and terrorist organisations. As a result, transnational organised crime such as human trafficking, the illegal trade in weapons and drugs, and cybercrime have increased. Terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al-Shabaab and the Islamic State have also been able to extend their areas of influence across borders. In 2024, the threat of terrorism and violent extremism remains one of the continent's most pressing peace and security concerns. Not all African countries have sufficient resources to counter these transnational threats and ensure the security of their populations.

In May 2013, the AU member states adopted “**Agenda 2063**” - the continent’s development, governance, and security vision. 10 years passing since its inception, “Agenda 2063” has taken on a greater focus on security sector reform, a rule of law approach to counter terrorism and the sharpening of interventions and prevention tools tailored to the different security challenges in line with the **African Peace Security Architecture (APSA)**, e.g. the **African Standby Force (ASF)**.

As security threats are becoming increasingly internationalised, the exchange of information between the national police units, collaboration in regional networks and effectively working together when facing serious challenges, is essential. Structures such as the **African Union’s Peace Support Operations Division (AU PSOD)** and the **AU mechanism for police cooperation (AFRIPOL)** exist for this purpose but need to be supported to fully assume their mandates.

Programme title	Programme to build and strengthen the police structures in selected partner countries in Africa
Regional component	Supporting police structures in the African Union and the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL)
Commissioned by	Federal Foreign Office
Lead executing agencies	African Union, Peace Support Operations Division, AFRIPOL
Other partners	EASFSEC, NARC, ECCAS, SADC, ECOWAS
Overall term	January 2023 to June 2026
Budget (2023-2026)	Approx. EUR 4.2 million

At the PSOD, guidelines are in development for **the training, deployment and cooperation of police officers serving in African Peace Support Operations (PSOs)**. Efforts are currently being placed on the proper specifications for attracting and recruiting police officers. The aim is to make the **ASF fit for purpose**.

AFRIPOL is continuously seeking to better its institutional development and operationalisation. Recent efforts are being placed on **expanding AFRIPOL’s outreach while co-ordinating capacity development strategies for police services within the member states**.

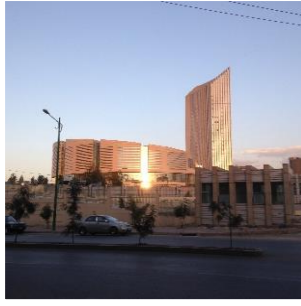


Photos from left to right:

A police officer takes details.

AFRIPOL headquarters

PSSG Task Force



Photos from left to right:

Strategy planning at
AMISOM

Headquarters of the AU
Commission

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What is the goal?

The institutional and personnel capacities of AU PSOD and AFRIPOL are strengthened based on rule of law principles and in terms of proximity to citizens, which contributes to the improved fulfilment of the ASF mandate and to the fight against serious crimes and transnational organised crime.

How do we work?

The programme has been supporting police reform processes in Africa on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office since 2009. It has already worked with **27 national and regional partners on the continent**. The current phase of the "Programme to build and strengthen the police structures in selected partner countries in Africa" covers three country components in Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Kenya and one regional component at AU and AFRPOL level.

The **AU component of the programme** has been conceptualised to accompany both structures, PSOD and AFRIPOL, to carry out their mandates. This includes supporting the ASF police selection processes by ensuring guidelines, standard operating procedures and implementation strategies are in place. AFRIPOL, on the other hand, is strengthened to broaden its reach, and enhance the technical capacities of its member states on issues relating to transnational organised crime at continental, regional, or national levels.

What have we achieved so far?

Standard operating procedures, such as for recruiting and training police officers, have been established and are currently being used as guidelines within the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms and police contributing countries for PSOs. Furthermore, an improvement in gender parity in assessments for PSOs has been realised, increasing the number of female police officers available for AU missions. AFRIPOL has adopted a five-year communication plan and corresponding branding guidelines. A training and capacity development strategy has also been developed by AFRIPOL to guide the technical coordination of capacity development with the member states.

In December 2023, a continental AU coordination meeting produced a joint action plan between the RECs/RMs, PSOD, AFRIPOL and strategic partners on PSO activities. The coordination between different AU entities as well as its partners remains a key focus for the years ahead.

What more do we want to do?

The AU regional component intends to build upon the programmatic activities to **professionalise the standardisation of operating procedures, support recruiting processes**, especially in **aspects of gender parity**, and foster **joint cooperative capacity development strategies**. AFRIPOL's mandate will be strengthened by **establishing strong networks, building up capacities of member states and the professionalisation** of national, regional, and continental police services through the implementation of codes of conduct.

The programme will continue placing an emphasis on knowledge exchange and cooperation between all stakeholders, supporting the "Agenda 2063" and ensuring Africa continues to have a stable peace and security architecture.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Registered offices in Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

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structures in selected partner countries in Africa
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As at: September 2024

Photo credits Photos 1 – 5: GIZ/Oliver Janser

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

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