An Overview of Peace and Security in Southern Africa

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The current state of peace and security in southern Africa is, to a large degree, the product of its history. Factors impacting on the political stability of the region today can be traced to the effects of age-old political structures and traditions (from the level of the village to that of the kingdom); to pre-colonial trading patterns and slavery; to the scramble for Africa and its subjugation under European colonisation; to waves of immigration from within and from beyond southern Africa; to the 'hot' superpower proxy wars of the Cold War; to the process of decolonisation and the struggle for control over the newly independent states; to the reconfiguration of global politics at the end of the Cold War; and to more recent changes and trends in the local and global landscape. Regrettably, this short overview is unable do justice to this history and its implications for peace and security in the region today (for such a historical perspective, see Bauer and Taylor 2005; Farley 2008; Reid 2012; Meredith 2011). It will focus its attention instead on southern Africa's recent past, beginning with the tumultuous events of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The End of the Cold War

The years marking the end of the Cold War were accompanied by great changes in the geopolitical landscape of southern Africa. Superpower rivalry was a major cause of the continuation of devastating armed conflicts in Mozambique and Angola, and it was thus no coincidence that the end of the Cold War also saw the realisation of major peace agreements in both cases. While this period marked the end of conflict in Mozambique, the peace in Angola unfortunately did not hold, and its residents would soon have to brace themselves for another round of conflict, but the circumstances of the conflict were quite different this time, not least in terms of the international dynamics surrounding it. Belligerents now had to rely on oil and diamonds, rather than on US and Soviet backing and weapons that were once in plentiful supply.

But there were positive outcomes of the Angolan peace process as well, not least the Tripartite Accord of 1988, which not only saw the withdrawal of foreign troops in Angola (South African and Cuban), but also the independence of Namibia, a territory that had had remained under apartheid South African rule despite UN Security Council resolutions calling for the decolonisation of the territory. And apartheid was not only crumbling in Namibia. Although white rule continued until 1994 in South Africa, by 1990 the last laws officially sanctioning apartheid in that country had been repealed, and the political structures that had sustained it were

soon to be no more. The road ahead was not so clear, however, for Lesotho. The country bordered on all sides by South Africa was plagued by political instability and a series of coup d'états.

Meanwhile, further north, the rumblings of instability were growing louder in Zaire, where the end of the Cold War meant a loss of US interest in propping up that country's long-time dictator and kleptocrat, Mobutu Sese Seko. Deprived of vital external support, Mobutu began faltering in the face of increasing domestic opposition and unrest, including a looting spree by thousands of unpaid soldiers and escalating local conflict in the Kivus. But even as the resources needed to maintain patronage networks and central control over the territory diminished – to the degree that he was nicknamed the 'Mayor of Kinshasa', Mobutu's skill as a political player remained, and he continued to play potential rivals against one another, holding onto power until a Rwandan-led invasion in 1996.

The end of the Cold War also saw increasing pressures to 'democratise', at least in the sense of having multiple political parties contesting the seat of power through elections. In 1990, multiparty elections were held for the first time in the Comoros, and in 1991, Zambia became the second country in southern African (after Mauritius) in which an incumbent relinquished power after having lost in democratic elections (technically, it was the first, considering that although Mauritius had experienced a change of power through the ballot in 1982, the head of state at the time was in fact the UK's Queen Elizabeth II). Within a few months of these elections, the Seychelles and Tanzania officially decided to make the transition from a single-party state to a multiparty democracy. Elections held in Madagascar in 1992-3 also resulted in an incumbent losing elections and stepping down, but not before intense domestic pressure and the massacre by presidential guards of protesters calling for democratic reforms. A transition to multiparty party politics followed in Malawi, where in 1994, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, who had clung to power since independence in 1964, was soundly defeated at the polls.

But there was no shortage of heads of state and ruling parties that continued to extend their stay in power throughout this turbulent period. The system of governance in Swaziland, for example, remained an absolute monarchy. Elections following peace agreements in Angola and Mozambique did not mean a change in the status quo at the top of the political hierarchy, but simply a defeat for the political wings of rebel movements. In Zimbabwe, presidential elections were held in 1990, but President Robert Mugabe's re-election was never in question. And while Seychelles and Tanzania both made a transition to multiparty democracy in 1991, ruling parties in both cases remained unchallenged. Botswana, a country with a reputation for political freedoms and democracy, nevertheless remained under the same ruling party that had led the country to independence.

Post-Cold War Developments

How has the region fared in the twenty or so years since the Cold War came to an end? In terms of armed conflict, some parts of southern Africa have experienced catastrophic levels of suffering associated with organised violence. The conflict that reignited in Angola would

continue until 2002. Scorched earth tactics (including the use of copious amounts of landmines) brought about untold levels of suffering for the civilian population. Weakened financially and militarily, the rebels were eventually defeated on the battlefield, with their leader, Jonas Savimbi, killed in combat. One of their final acts was a terrorist attack on a train killing more than 250 people. The final phase of the conflict cost hundreds of thousands of lives (see Malaquias 2007 for an analysis of the rise and fall of the insurgency).

In Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the effects of armed conflict would be even worse. The aftermath of the Rwandan genocide dealt the final blow to the Mobutu regime in Zaire. Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Angola invaded Zaire in 1996, in an assault coordinated with an alliance of domestic rebel groups, and the government fell the following year. A falling out between Rwanda and the new Kabila regime in Kinshasa saw Rwanda re-invade in 1998 (with Uganda and Burundi) in support of a fresh set of local proxy groups, but this time, Angola, Zimbabwe and, to a lesser extent, Namibia, Chad and Sudan came to the aid of the new government. At a macro level, a territorial stalemate ensued, and the conflict became a patchwork of a vast array of actors and fluid alliances, including numerous national forces, rebel groups and militias (backed by a mineral-laden war economy). Rather than being a single conflict, it is more accurately described as a series of overlapping local, national and international conflicts with powerful security, political and economic dimensions (see Prunier 2009; Reyntjens 2009). The Inter-Congolese Dialogue and the associated peace agreements did much to quell the conflict at international and national levels, and saw the withdrawal of foreign forces by 2003, but the unresolved local-level conflicts (with cross-border dimensions) in the eastern DRC have continued largely unabated. At the time of writing, the eastern city of Goma is under threat from a powerful contingent of renegade forces thought to be supported by Rwanda. To date the conflicts in the DRC have been responsible for the loss of millions of lives (IRC 2008). Articles in this issue by Gerrie Swart and Masako Yonekawa discuss the current state of the conflict – one in which the lines between peace and war, and between peace and justice remain dangerously blurred.

Large-scale armed conflict has mercifully not been witnessed elsewhere in southern Africa. This does not necessarily mean, however, that as a whole the region has been in a state of what can be called peace. There have been several examples of outbreaks of political violence (albeit on a relatively small scale) in the region in recent years. In Angola, while at a national level, the guns have been silent for more than a decade, pockets of violence associated with a secession movement (and government reaction) have remained in the enclave of Cabinda (at least up until 2006) leaving up to 1,500 people dead (Project Ploughshares 2007). Tensions also remain high between Angola and the DRC over border demarcation, oil ownership, and relations with Uganda and Rwanda, resulting in mass expulsion (accompanied by widespread rape and other forms of human rights abuse) of Congolese in Angola. Elsewhere, outbreaks of violence in Zimbabwe have been the subject of a great deal of attention, not least from Western policymakers and media outlets. In 2000, reforms aimed ostensibly at ending inequalities in land ownership established under colonial rule, resulted in violent farm invasions targeting white

commercial farmers. This upheaval, combined with economic mismanagement and political wrangling, saw the economy spiral and the currency collapse. Elections in 2008 were marred by violence and intimidation, and left the incumbent, Mugabe, in power only after the opposition leader announced he would not stand in the run-off vote.

Ten years earlier, contested elections in Lesotho were also the subject of regional concern. In this case, a military intervention conducted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) ensued. Lesotho now appears to have achieved some measure of political stability. The main troop contributor for this intervention, South Africa, has not been free of violence either. In 2008, riots targeting foreigners in the country left more than 60 people dead and up to 100,000 displaced (Kapp 2008). Furthermore, observers point to a disturbing trend of politicisation of the security services and growing political repression (Solomon 2012). At the time of writing, the country was reeling in the wake of the shooting of protesting miners that left 34 dead.

Political violence and instability have not been limited to the mainland. The Comoros have experienced considerable political upheaval over the past fifteen years, with a secessionist attempt by two of its islands, multiple coups and coup attempts, and finally a military intervention in 2008, in this case by the African Union (AU). More recently, Madagascar earned suspensions (still in place) from both the AU and SADC, following a coup d'état that occurred in the midst of public uprising against what was seen as an increasingly authoritarian government. The island state has since seen a further coup attempt and a mutiny within the army. Talks are currently underway with a view to achieving a political settlement. Closer to the mainland, Zanzibar, Tanzania's semi-autonomous archipelago, has a history of violent clashes over contested election results, but peaceful elections held in 2010 offer hope that this is a past that Zanzibar has overcome.

The 'Arab Spring' has added a new dimension to political tensions in the region. Although most governments in southern Africa cannot be compared (in terms of repressiveness) to many in the Arab world, there remains much work to be done to consolidate democracy, something that is quite visible in the existence of a number of heads of state and/or political parties that continue to cling to power (usually using a variety of dubious means) for extended periods of time. Jose Eduardo dos Santos has been in power in Angola since 1979, and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is not far behind in terms of time at the helm. In many other countries (Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana and Namibia, for example), the ruling parties still remain unchanged since independence. Against this backdrop, and the backdrop of poverty and unemployment still prevalent throughout the region, the significance of the Arab Spring has not been lost on embattled opposition leaders, nor on a significant portion of the population. Protests inspired by the Arab Spring have sprung up in Swaziland, Mozambique, and even Angola. The loss of Zambia's Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) at the polls in 2011, after twenty years in power, was a long time coming, but the Arab Spring no doubt served to boost the fortunes of the opposition party that eventually took power. Nor has the significance of the events in northern Africa been lost on those in power in the south. The shutting down of protests in most

countries has been swift. In the case of Zimbabwe, for example, opposition party members were arrested for simply gathering to discuss the Arab Spring.

Conflict Resolution

The story of peace and security in southern Africa is not simply one that chronicles the problems it faces. Southern Africa has at its disposal several mechanisms for conflict resolution and the reduction of security threats. The UN Security Council has been a key actor in attempts to secure peace in the region's conflicts, most notably establishing and maintaining large-scale peacekeeping operations in Mozambique, Angola and the DRC. Other UN organs have also been called upon in the resolution of disputes. Botswana and Namibia, for example, amicably settled a dispute over the demarcation of the border between them after accepting a ruling by the International Court of Justice in 2000, and then by a joint commission in 2003. The AU, increasingly active (albeit limited in terms of resources) since its transition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has also served as a vehicle for attempts at conflict resolution. As noted above, the AU sent troops into the Comoros, and, more recently, has suggested that it may send troops to the DRC to help quell the rebellion there (Al Jazeera 2012). It has been a forum in which the situation in Zimbabwe has been the object of considerable debate.

But the region also has its own region-specific organisation – SADC. While it officially came into being in its current form in 1992, SADC has its origins in the Frontline States (FLS) group aimed at ending colonial and white-rule, and the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was formed in 1980. In 1998, it was the vehicle for controversial interventions in Lesotho and the DRC. Over the past fifteen years or so, SADC has taken steps to further institutionalise measures aimed at enhancing and peace and security in the region. In 1996, it established the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC). A process of restructuring of SADC institutions was initiated in 1999, and in 2001, members signed the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The implementation of this Protocol was operationalized in 2004, after the signing of a Mutual Defence Pact in 2003, and the adoption of a Strategic Indicative Plan for the OPDSC (SIPO), which was then superseded by SIPO II, adopted in 2010 (see Van Nieuwkerk 2012). SADC also serves as the body through which southern Africa is to participate in the African Standby Force (ASF). In 2007, SADC launched its regional brigade (SADCBRIG) and has been working towards making it fully operational (Mandrup 2009). In 2009 SADCBRIG declared that it was ready for deployment, but it still lacks strategic lift and logistic capabilities. The flurry of activity and proliferation of acronyms are certainly welcome signs of progress. The question that lingers, however, is the degree to which protocols, pacts and plans will be implemented and translated into actual progress on the ground. There appears to be a degree of scepticism on this matter (Nathan 2012).

Efforts aimed at conflict resolution are not only visible in the development of institutions. Leaders from southern Africa (past and present) have tried their hand at mediation on numerous occasions. Botswana's former president, Ketumile Masire, for example, took on the task of mediator for the conflict in the DRC in 2000. A peace agreement for the conflict in Angola was

negotiated and signed in Zambia (the Lusaka Protocol in 1994); and agreements to end conflict in the DRC were made in Zambia (Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999), Angola (Luanda Accord in 2002), and South Africa (Sun City Agreement, Pretoria Accord and Pretoria Agreement in 2002). South African presidents have also attempted to mediate in the political crises in Zimbabwe, as critiqued by George Abel Mhango in this issue. Mediation attempts have not only been limited to the resolution of conflicts occurring in southern Africa. Former Tanzanian president, Julius Nyrere, for example, served as mediator for the conflict in Burundi. And as discussed in depth by Katabaro Miti in his article in this issue, successive South African presidents have engaged in diplomacy to resolve conflicts not only within the region, but also in Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Libya.

In many other ways, southern Africa finds itself engaging in peace and security issues beyond the region, whether by necessity or by choice. Four of the eleven states comprising the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region are from southern Africa (Angola, DRC, Tanzania and Zambia), and the issues it deals with cannot be separated from those concerning much of central and eastern Africa, including a number of cross-border rebellions that have emerged from Uganda, Rwanda and (South) Sudan.

Finally, it is important to note that southern African states are actively engaged in matters of peace and security at a global level, through membership in the UN Security Council (South Africa is currently a member), and through contributions to peacekeeping operations throughout the world. At the time of writing, ten states from southern Africa were contributing approximately 4,700 troops to peacekeeping operations, 70 percent of which were deployed outside southern Africa (the DRC is the only southern African country currently hosting peacekeepers) (UN 2012).

The Broader Context of Peace and Security

The discussion on peace and security in southern Africa, cannot, however, be limited to one that deals simply with the struggles over leadership, state structures, and conflict and cooperation between the countries that comprise the region. Firstly, Southern Africa's security is connected with security issues that have broader geopolitical implications. Secondly, the unit of the state is hardly adequate to contain or describe the multitude of actors that have an impact (both positive and negative) on peace and security. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the perceived achievement and maintenance of social justice and well-being at the community and individual levels are some of the most fundamental elements of peace and security.

Colonialism in southern Africa officially ended in the 1960s and 70s, but its legacy remains. With the exception of South Africa, 'development' under colonialism was focused largely on facilitating the extraction of natural resources, and southern Africa post-independence was left in many ways economically dependent on the capital-rich former colonial powers, particularly after the oil shocks of the 1970s. Economic and political ties between former colonies and former colonisers remain close, and tend to favour the latter. Other powers have brought their influence to bear on the region – the USA and USSR in the Cold War era (needless to say, the USA

remains exceptionally influential today), and, more recently, China. The power that these external state actors can (and do) exert (both positive and negative) on matters of peace and security in the region cannot be ignored. They are armed not only with military might and the ability to project (or assist in the projection of) military might, but also with the ability to give and withhold aid vital to the day-to-day running of countries in the region, and to impose diplomatic and economic sanctions. The clout that they carry in the UN Security Council and international financial institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) also makes such actors a force to be reckoned with.

Influence takes on many forms. US legislation adopted in 2010 that regulates the use of minerals coming from the DRC, for example, has considerable implications for peace and security in that country and in the region (Global Witness 2011). So too does China's multi-billion dollar deal with the DRC exchanging mineral resources for the building of roads, railroads and other infrastructure (Meyer 2012). Influence can also be seen in the dilemma that Malawi faced over the hosting of an AU summit in 2012 because of the planned attendance of Sudan's leader, Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes over the conflict in Darfur. Malawi was bound by the AU to accept al-Bashir's attendance, but at the same time obliged as a party to the ICC to arrest him upon arrival. Malawi's new administration risked falling out of favour with Western donors and losing valuable aid if it allowed al-Bashir to enter the country without arresting him, and eventually chose to decline its role as summit host (Dzinesa 2012). In a different vein, it is important to note that Mauritius has recently commenced negotiations with the UK in a bid to regain the Chagos Islands. If successful, the political boundaries of southern Africa will extend deep into the Indian Ocean. More importantly, it will include a major US fleet and armed forces support base on the island of Diego Garcia. After expelling the inhabitants, the UK leased the island to the USA in the 1970s, and it has since been used as a base for the bombing of Afghanistan and Iraq, and possibly as a 'black site' CIA prison (Doward 2008). Mauritius intends to allow the US base to remain operational on the island.

Beyond the states that make up southern Africa and the major powers beyond, there is a whole host of non-state actors that need to be taken into account when considering the peace and security of the region (see, for example, Dokken 2008: 169-94). Importantly, such actors are not only 'non-state' actors in the sense that they are not controlled by the state in which they may be based, but also in the sense that they operate beyond (and often with little regard for) state borders. Some participate directly in violence associated with armed conflict – most notably, these are rebels, warlords/strongmen, militia, and even gangs or bandits that take advantage of a power vacuum and/or culture of impunity (these are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories). Such actors have, of course, been especially prominent in the conflict in the DRC. Private military corporations (PMCs – read mercenaries) have also played a role in conflicts in the region. They were key players in the Congo Crisis in the 1960s, and South African PMCs were active in conflicts throughout the continent in the 1990s, until they were banned by South African legislation introduced in 1998 (although this didn't stop an attempted coup d'état in

Equatorial Guinea by mercenaries from South Africa in 2005). Others actors play a role in facilitating conflict – corporations and individuals dealing in weapons, and/or minerals or other resources that are implicated in funding conflict.

Some of the negative forces that threaten peace and security have emerged over the past decade. The scourge of piracy that has its roots in the collapse of Somalia and the resulting power vacuum there, for example, has had a direct impact on southern Africa, with attacks being reported as far south as Mozambique. Mauritius, the Seychelles and Tanzania have recently signed agreements with the UK and the EU to receive and prosecute suspected pirates arrested by naval patrols in the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, in 2012, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania signed a tripartite agreement to coordinate their countermeasures against piracy. Nor has southern Africa been immune to the reaches of global terror networks and Western responses in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001. In 2005, for example, a British terror suspect with apparent links to Osama bin Laden was arrested in Zambia. At a broader level, concerns are growing about the role that South Africa is playing as an unwilling host to global terrorist networks, and about South Africa's inadequate countermeasures (Solomon 2011).

Conversely, there are non-state actors that have the potential to bridge differences between conflicting sectors of society, and ameliorate armed conflict and its effects. These include religious bodies, human rights groups, trade unions, women's groups, traditional leaders, the mass media, academic institutions and humanitarian aid groups (Molutsi 2003). At times, this may entail direct intervention. The Community of Sant'Egidio, a private religious organisation, for example, played a key role in negotiations to end conflict in Mozambique (Hume 1994). During Zimbabwe's 2008 political crisis, human rights groups monitored a Chinese ship carrying arms bound for Zimbabwe, petitioning for the prevention of its delivery, while union-backed dock workers in Durban, South Africa, physically prevented its cargo from being unloaded (BBC 2008). In a more general sense, non-governmental aid groups active on the ground in and around conflict zones are instrumental in reducing and preventing conflict-related suffering through emergency interventions providing food, medical care and shelter for those affected by the violence. Nowhere has this been seen more clearly than in responses to the conflict in the DRC.

Other actors have a more indirect (but equally important) role in conflict prevention and/or resolution. The mass media, for example, can choose to exacerbate tensions between groups in society, but they can also choose to apply a peace journalism approach, working to ease tensions, and offering the people not only the voices of the belligerents, but also of the voices of those working for peace (Lynch 2008). A variety of groups representing civil society at the grass-roots level also work to overcome differences, prevent the use of violence as a form of dispute resolution, and build peace. The role of women's organisations is critical in this regard. The voices of these groups are helping to change the traditionally male-dominated discourse on armed conflict, in which women are more often than not treated simply as voiceless victims. The rise of such groups points to changes in the way in which gender is viewed, both within the region and globally. Other groups can play other roles. Human rights organisations and academic institutions are able to identify and raise awareness in response to social and political threats to

peace and security. Religious groups have the potential to promote reconciliation and ease suffering in post-conflict situations. These and other such groups that make up civil society are transcending political power and borders, and becoming increasingly active in the arena of peace and security issues.

The above discussion points to the importance of maintaining a broad perspective – the achievement of maintenance of peace and security cannot be reduced to the consolidation of national political structures, the realisation of solid regional (and extra-regional) relations, and the neutralisation of (negative) non-state actors that participate in, and/or facilitate armed conflict. The achievement of a positive peace means adequately addressing the root causes of conflict (whether armed or social, present or potential), and maintaining a concern for human security as well as state and/or regional security. This is something that has macro- and micro-level implications, and is just as relevant within communities as it is within states and regions.

Poverty is perhaps an obvious starting point. While many economies in southern Africa are currently experiencing impressive levels of growth, poverty remains a harsh reality for the majority of the population in most of the region. In terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP – adjusted for purchasing power parity), the DRC was ranked the lowest of more than 226 states and territories for 2011, followed by Zimbabwe (CIA World Factbook 2012a). Equally importantly, it is often not simply the existence of poverty per se, but also the distribution of poverty in a society – the gap between the haves and the have-nots – that serves as a key factor in conflict. Most southern African countries (most notably Namibia and South Africa) perform very poorly on the Gini index that measures the inequality in the distribution of family income, with Namibia and South Africa ranking as the countries with the highest levels of inequality in the world (CIA World Factbook 2012b). Poverty and inequalities in distribution of income are also related to the incidence of crime, which is another destabilising factor in society. This brings the performance of local systems of justice into the equation. In her contribution to this issue, Riziki Shahari Mngwali reminds us of the importance of dealing with the 'injustices' inherent in inadequately resourced and overburdened justice systems, and looks to community mediation as a way of ameliorating the situation.

The issue of inequality is not only a matter of family income either. Inequalities are also a major source of friction from a host of other perspectives, including land ownership, citizenship rights, access to public services and jobs, food and water security, political representation and gender. This may the result of colonial policies, post-independence patronage politics (see Chabal and Daloz 1999), lifestyle/immigration patterns, or a combination of some or all of the above. Although the factors involved in what became a conflict at a continental level in the DRC, for example, are many and varied, the local causes of conflict are closely related to politically charged clashes over citizenship and land ownership that came about because of waves of immigration from neighbouring Rwanda – beginning more than a century ago. Similarly, a key element of conflict in Zimbabwe, particularly after 2000, is related to the distribution of land, an issue that has its origins in colonial policies that gave the vast majority of arable land to the white settlers. While conflicts in Africa are often labelled as being 'ethnic' conflicts, the apparent

identity-based element is usually better understood as a manifestation of such inequalities in the distribution of resources, rights and power. The actual outbreak of armed conflict often takes the form of violent outbursts by disenfranchised youth, who are frustrated and angry at the poverty, the inequality, the dearth of employment opportunities they face, and the "patrimonial 'machinery' of dysfunctional states" (Bøås and Dunn 2007: 36).

The role of health and education in the maintenance of peace and security cannot be underestimated either. Southern Africa has the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the world, and this has had devastating effects not just for the individuals who suffer from it, but, because of the large numbers of people affected, for society as a whole as well. It continues to rob society of human resources vital for the protection, wellbeing and development of society, not least in terms of defence, education and the health sector itself. Needless to say, this has become a major source of destabilisation for the region (see Ala 2003). It is also important to consider the issue of health problems as a consequence of violent conflict. The vast majority of conflict-related deaths in the DRC have been caused by sickness and starvation; and sexual violence perpetrated on a scale unparalleled in the world has had horrendous physical, psychological and social consequences for the victims, their families and their communities. Education also serves as a force for peace. Firstly, it is a tool to combat ignorance – which provides a fertile breeding ground for xenophobia, discrimination and bigotry. Secondly, education tends to increase the life choices available to its recipients, which potentially opens up employment opportunities. Finally, it contributes to the development of informed leadership in all sectors of society. Southern Africa continues to face major challenges with regards to both health and education. In 2011, the Human Development Index, which takes into account health, education and living standards, ranked the DRC as the lowest of 187 countries (although some countries, such as Somalia, were not included), and Mozambique was not far behind (UNDP 2011: 130). In many ways, the situation is certainly improving, but the road ahead is long.

Southern African Peace and Security Studies

There is a great deal of knowledge and experience in matters of conflict, peace and security in southern Africa. From an academic perspective, several research institutes with rich histories (based mostly in South Africa) continue to produce powerful analysis of the state of affairs in the region. And yet, seen from a global level, the resources devoted to understanding and learning the lessons of conflict and insecurity in southern Africa pale in comparison to those devoted to other parts of the world. Considering the challenges the region faces in this regard, this is clearly an issue that needs addressing. In many cases, valuable lessons, both academic and practical, remain within the minds of the individuals, and within the archives of the institutions, that have learned them. Gathering, compiling, analysing and making use of these lessons is an important endeavour, with relevance not only for the region itself, but for other parts of the world as well. There is a need for more research, on a variety of levels and from a variety of perspectives, on the state of conflict, peace and security in southern Africa.

This is the rationale behind the establishment of *Southern African Peace and Security Studies*. It emerged from discussions within a newly formed regional network of researchers and practitioners. Founded in 2011, it has taken the form of collaboration between a variety of institutions in the region and beyond, with cores in the University of Zambia, Zambian Open University, University of the Free State (South Africa), and the Mozambique-Tanzania Centre for Foreign Relations (Tanzania), together with Osaka University (Japan). Collaboration to date has included an international conference, the movement of scholars within and beyond southern Africa, and the establishment of a joint blog (Southern African Peace and Security Blog). The network held its first conference in Lusaka, Zambia in September 2011, focusing on the subject of mediation and peacemaking in southern Africa. This first issue of the journal is comprised primarily of papers presented at that conference. The network is in the process of institutionalisation, and will soon evolve into a centre based in Zambia – the Southern African Centre for Collaboration on Peace and Security (SACCPS).

While the network is anchored to these academic institutions, it remains highly conscious of the need for its projects to be undertaken with the active participation of policymakers and representatives of civil society. This will ensure that the research conducted and lessons learned are firmly grounded in the demand for the development of practical solutions for real-world issues, and that the achievements are accessible and useful to policymakers and civil society. The 2011 Lusaka conference welcomed not only participants from academia, but also representatives from the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, a number of non-governmental organisations, and the media. This emphasis can also be seen in the format of this journal, with the inclusion of both academic articles and policy briefs.

With its sights set firmly on the region, *Southern African Peace and Security Studies* aims to produce a quality mix of cutting-edge academic and practical policy-oriented content, offering a variety of perspectives from experts and practitioners from within and beyond the region. The floor is now open.

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