

## **Structural and Institutional Impediments Confronting Collective Security Institutions in The Eastern Africa Sub Region: Which Way for Lasting Peace?**

*By*

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### **Abstract**

Resurgent and protracted conflicts are common in the Eastern Africa sub-region despite the existence of several Collective Security Institutions (CSIs) including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), and the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF). Anecdotal evidence points to weaknesses in their configurations and execution of mandate. This study sought to explore the structural and institutional challenges that confront CSIs in pursuit of conflict resolution in the sub-region. A mixed-method research approach incorporating cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs was adopted. The target population included 638 members of the three CSIs: IGAD (230) EAC (190), EASF (218), and 210 members of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) addressing peace and security in the region. A sample size of 226 members was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. A stratified random sampling procedure was then used to select staff from the strategic, operational and tactical levels at the three CSIs while cluster and purposive sampling techniques were used to obtain CSO representatives and beneficiaries. Questionnaires, interviews, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to collect data from respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed and summarized using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic methods based on the research objectives. Findings revealed that structural and institutional factors such as overlapping mandates, overreliance on donor funding and lack of political commitment to implement agreed treaties and protocols affected the CSIs' pursuit of conflict resolution. The study recommends the alignment and re-casting of CSIs in the region to address overlaps by tapping on areas of comparative advantage and specialization for greater synergy in pursuit of sustainable peace.

**Keywords:** *Collective Security Institutions; Peace and conflict, Eastern Africa sub-region.*

### **Introduction**

Modern-day security challenges have overwhelmed even the most powerful states and regions. Consequently, collective approaches to international security have become an inevitability. The

Eastern African states have in place, established Collective Security Institutions (CSIs) and a peace and security framework comprising the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community (EAC), and the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF). Despite the presence of these institutions, the sub-region continues to witness violent and eruptive protracted conflicts. Specifically, the prominence of security threats such as terrorism, electoral violence, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), and the longstanding conflicts, particularly in Somalia and South Sudan, vis a vis the desirability for sustainable regional development has seen CSIs in the sub-region set up mechanisms for peace, security and good governance (Khadiagala, 2018). The EAC Treaty, for instance, obliges member states to abide by operational principles related to democracy, the rule of law, social justice, and universally accepted standards of human rights (Khadiagala, 2018). Yet, despite the presence of functional CSIs and the support of international partners, human security threats and conflicts persist (Gnanguênon, 2020).

The AU, IGAD, EAC, and EASF have advanced regional peace and stability, conflict relapse in Eastern Africa is common, with traditional conflicts evolving and new ones emerging. Despite overall conflict reduction in Africa, eight of the world's top twenty most unstable states are in Eastern Africa. (FSI Index 2022/ Statista, 2022); four of the fourteen least peaceful countries in the world are located in Eastern Africa (Institute for Economic and Peace, 2022) and eleven Eastern African countries scored low on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2022). The extant CSIs and the proliferation of others in the sub region coupled with and the continuity of unresolved conflicts in the region brings to fore arguments as to whether their existence is an opportunity to achieving the aspired sustainable peace and security (Bayeh, 2020). Additionally, the CSIs dismal performance in addressing emerging security challenges (climate change, rapid urbanization, the youth bulge and pandemics) makes it imperative to reflect on their nature and critically examine their structural and institutional frameworks.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

From global review, there exists some evidence pointing at structural, functional and institutional limitations among CSIs. For instance, Rwengabo (2016) analyzed how institutional design affects the African Peace and Security Architecture's (APSA's) implementation in Eastern Africa. The study derived that states' overlapping memberships in both RECs and Regional Brigades hampers decision-making, creates conflicts in obligations and limits intra-REC coordination and commitment adversely affecting implementation. To correct this conundrum, Regional Brigades within APSA ought to be tailored along RECs while enhancing their (RECs) politico-security cooperation.

Rwengabo (2016) reinforces the structural and institutional thematic concern of this paper, the present study analyzed structural and institutional challenges of IGAD, EAC and EASF and their influence on the effectiveness of the CSI's management of contemporary security threats and conflict resolution mechanisms in Somalia, South Sudan and Burundi.

Okon (2020) assessed the power indices in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the South African Development Community (SADC) to account for the CSIs' timely response to security threats and conflicts in the Western African and Southern African sub-regions respectively. The study argued that state power is key to the configuration and survival of regional security arrangements especially within an enmity-amity security complex. This in turn determines the emergence of a lead or pivotal state to spearhead the pursuit of peace and security within a subregion. While exemplifying with other regions, Okon (2020) contended that Brazil took a lead role in the establishment of the Union of South America Nations (UNSUR) while the US mobilized a security intervention in the Balkan conflict by lobbying support from other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members. In Africa, Nigeria, and South Africa took a lead role in the formation of the ECOWAS Standby Force and SADC Standby Force in West and Southern Africa respectively. The study concluded that indices of power that related to Nigeria in ECOWAS and South Africa in SADC include a natural strategic geographical location especially one aligned to a long seaport, endowment with natural resources, huge industrial capacity, military capability, and a large young and vibrant population amongst others. Hegemonic issues formed part of the structural concerns that this work has interrogated within the context of IGAD, EAC, and EASF in the Eastern Africa subregion.

A growing number of studies have documented the role of CSIs in peacebuilding. Bereketeb (2019) investigated the role of IGAD in peace-building in the Horn of Africa, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study concluded that problems stemming from IGAD were related to its heavy dependence on external aid, lack of capacity, and member states' narrow national interests. Additionally, it emerged that Ethiopia's domination had rendered the organization very weak in its peace-building efforts in the region. Hassan (2017) sought to determine the effectiveness of IGAD in promoting regional diplomacy with a case study of the Somalia peace process indicating both structural and process failures were evident. Kabage (2020) studied the structure of the EASF and role of the regional mechanism in maintenance of peace and security in Kenya and Somalia. The study employed descriptive research design based on the Regional Security Complex theory and argued that in spite of having existed for over a decade,

EASF's attempts to mitigate regional security challenges especially in Kenya and Somalia have largely been elusive and insignificant pushing the CSI to occupy a bystander position as opposed to a robust mechanism for conflict resolution in the sub-region. Kabage (2020) focused on the structure of EASF given its role in the maintenance of peace and security in Kenya and Somalia while the current study analyzed structural and institutional factors hindering effective conflict resolution efforts by IGAD, EAC, and EASF in the Eastern Africa subregion. The current study builds on studies by Bereketab (2019) and Hassan (2018) which delved into structural and institutional challenges of CSIs providing the basis for the focused analysis to establish implications on effective conflict resolution mechanisms.

Studying challenges facing EAC using an exploratory research design and from a new regionalism approach, Kimeu (2020) established that multiple memberships in regional organizations negatively affect EAC member states' commitment to the EAC mandate. Whereas Kimeu (2020) focused on EAC, the present study analyzed structural and institutional factors affecting three CSIs in the Eastern Africa subregion (IGAD, EAC, and EASF) using a mixed methods research approach. Similarly, Asgedom (2019) analyzed the achievements and challenges of the AU-IGAD partnership and observed that the collaboration grappled with financial, legal, political, and structural concerns rendered the peace and security architecture of the AU and IGAD counterproductive to the achievement of its goals and objectives. Further, Hamad (2016) sought to investigate why the EAC was not taking a leading role in regional maritime security governance. Findings revealed that the EAC lacked a clear maritime strategy and member states' commitment was lacking or unbalanced. For instance, Tanzania's overlapping membership in EAC and SADC complicated the implementation of a uniform maritime security framework. Hamad (2016) thus concluded that EAC's navies may be unable to work together in maritime security due to sovereignty concerns that influence political commitment to common maritime security approaches. The present study analyzed structural and institutional challenges affecting IGAD, EAC, and EASF in pursuit of conflict resolution mechanisms beyond the maritime security domain.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a mixed method research approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative paradigms while utilizing cross-sectional and phenomenological research designs. Cross-sectional surveys are suitable in the examination of prevalence of cases in a population at a given period of time and involve drawing a sample from a population of interest and making use

of standardized questions where reliability of items is determined and results/findings can be generalized (Kothari and Garg, 2019). Cross-sectional Survey was used to collect data across variables at one given point in time and allowed use of questionnaires. The design was also appropriate for the large sample size drawn from the CSIs (IGAD, EAC & EASF), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) representatives, and their beneficiaries. The study also adopted a phenomenological research design which facilitated the collection of data on the lived experiences and views of individuals who had been victims or had witnessed conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan, and Burundi. The target population consisted of 638 staff of the CSIs: IGAD (230) EAC (190)EASF (218), and 210 CSOs dealing with peace and security (Somalia 40, South Sudan 90, andBurundi 80). A representative sample of 226 was determined using Kredecjie and Morgan (1970).Stratified random sampling was then used to sample strategic, operational and tactical level staff of the CSIs. The cluster sampling technique was used to obtain CSOs from the administrative units in the three countries whereas the purposive sampling procedure was used to obtain CSOs dealing with peace and security and CSOs beneficiaries from South Sudan, Somalia, and Burundi.

Open and close-ended questionnaires were used to obtain quantitative and qualitative data from respondents of the 3 CSIs drawing from both operational and tactical levels while interview schedules were used to obtain in-depth data from CSIs strategic staff and from representatives of sampled CSOs. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) allowed an exploration of views and experiences from beneficiaries of the CSOs who had witnessed or were victims of conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and Burundi. Content validity of the instruments was determined through consultations with experts in the field of peace and conflict while the reliability test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method. All the instruments in use achieved a coefficient of over 0.7 which is considered satisfactory (George & Mallery, 2003). Quantitative data were analyzed and summarized using descriptive statistics whereas qualitative data mainly from interviews and FGDs were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed. Findings were presented using the narrative method complemented with voices.

### **Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

The study established that the major structural and institutional factors that affect conflict resolution efforts of IGAD, EAC and EASF were overlapping mandates, inadequate political commitment, financial handicaps, lack of regional hegemony and inadequate policy and legal frameworks. Each of these are described in further detail in the next section.

**a) Overlapping mandates**

Concerning mandate, a majority of respondents indicated that there was an overlap across the three CSIs which greatly hampered efficiency in the achievement of regional peace and security by the three CSIs. From IGAD (83.9%) respondents were of this view which was affirmed by 75.9% and 86.7% of EAC and EASF respondents respectively. From interviews with members of CSOs, the three CSIs were involved in a range of similar sectoral activities pointing out that IGAD and EAC engage in interventions targeted at agriculture, health, environment, economic cooperation, peace, and security while the EASF was more directly involved in peace and security initiatives. Interviewees at IGAD observed that the overlap of mandates coupled with state membership in numerous CSIs affected the degree of member commitment to CSI objectives.

Further, a section of interviewees drawn from the EAC revealed that overlapping mandates on one hand caused unhealthy competition amongst states and on the other hand created multiple financial responsibilities leading to fatigue and lack of commitment to the organization's goals. Respondents at the EASF and among CSO interviewees viewed overlapping mandates as responsible for low member states' commitment towards the different regional security arrangements since funding all three to perform the same role was burdensome to most. Further, respondents reported that multiple memberships led to divided loyalties that compromised commitment to mandates of some CSIs at the expense of others. The majority of interviewees in the 3 studied CSIs were in agreement that duplication of roles drains the budgets of the CSIs and leads to reduced commitment and loyalty to respective regional security arrangements. Additionally, member states felt that the CSIs presented multiple objectives and this overstretched their resources.

The findings of this study are in agreement with a study conducted by Rwengabo (2016) which observed that interlocking arrangements hinder the IGAD, EAC, and EASF from attaining their regional stabilization mandates. The study also indicated that overlapping mandates caused by the duplicity of membership into various CSIs and bureaucratic decision-making processes hindered the effective implementation of APSA. The study blamed negative duplication of efforts, poor implementation and harmonization, and under-utilization of scarce resources to the overlapping mandates. This aligns with Byiers (2016) who states that IGAD has been hindered from achieving its peace and security mandate because it had numerous specialized institutions with 15 different

offices spread across member states and posing the challenge of integration of functions. It was evident from the current study that sometimes these specialized institutions sought donor aid independently, a factor that may compromise unity of purpose and voice in seeking a common approach for the IGAD agenda.

These findings imply that Eastern African CSIs operate within a region with multiple regional organizations, overlapping memberships, and commitments resulting in conflict of interests and this could expose them to unhealthy competition in conflict management. Consequently, IGAD, EAC, and EASF may never properly function in the context of an environment of several regional organizations and member countries pursuing varied interests.

#### **b) Political Commitment**

The study investigated the factor of political commitment of the three CSIs under study. A total of 80.7 % (IGAD), 79.3 % (EAC), and 51.5 % (EASF) of respondents indicated that political commitment is a key factor affecting the success of the CSIs in their pursuit of regional stabilization in the subregion. Further analysis from interviews conducted at IGAD reveals that CSIs represented states whose state interests may supersede the collective interests of a region implying that CSI did not operate independently but were oriented to what the political leadership approved of. CSO interviewees reported that owing to a lack of autonomy and independence, civil servants seconded to serve in various capacities in IGAD affirm their loyalty to their mother countries and not exactly to the CSI agenda.

Respondents noted a lack of political commitment in South Sudan's peace process, with leaders ignoring ceasefire agreements and IGAD member states failing to empower the IGAD secretariat for effective administration. As reported by one CSO informant:

...even though the Secretariat ought to independently administer the regional body, the IGAD Secretariat has no capacity to implement decisions but relies on direction provided by the Council of Ministers and the Assembly. In such circumstances, political interference from respective states may not be ruled out and as a result, the role of the Secretariat is so downgraded that at times, it does not even attend meetings of the council of ministers... (CSO informant 04, South Sudan, 2021).

CSO informants in South Sudan noted that IGAD member states lack commitment, withholding executive independence from the IGAD secretariat. They highlighted that the IGAD Executive

Secretary is politically appointed, with decision-making power residing with national leaders, rendering the Secretariat largely irrelevant. Strategic level interviewees at the EAC echoed concerns about partner states' lack of political commitment, noting that national sovereignty makes the security sector sensitive. Consequently, states resist collective peace policies that conflict with their interests, often invoking sovereignty to avoid regional interventions. Citing an example, the interviewees indicated that the 2015 Burundi crisis was a result of the failure of the political class to commit to the full adherence and implementation of the Arusha Accord. Additionally, informants drawn from CSOs during an FGD highlighted that the EAC had mechanisms for preventive diplomacy but these policies may not be fully implemented due to existing political differences of opinion between member states. They observed that political dispositions made some EAC members desire or shun alliances.

Tactical-level respondents at the EASF reported that political support deficiencies hinder decision implementation, including troop deployment and funding. They noted suspicion and rivalry among member states, who prioritize national security objectives over EASF goals, thereby limiting peace and security efforts in Eastern Africa. The findings agree with those of Nantulya (2016) who asserts that a lack of strategic political harmony among EAC members led to the failure of the CSI to provide a roadmap to return to constitutional order in Burundi. Members' disunity coupled with a lack of focused dialogue led to states boycotting emergency summits in Burundi. This was a show of lack of political commitment as opined by Elowson and Albuquerque (2017). This view is also supported by Apuuli (2017) who established that the issue of protecting the perceived national interests of every member state also influences the strategies which should contribute to peace and stability in the region. IGAD, EAC and EASF member states make political considerations before acceding to any regional security arrangements and this hurts regional stabilization.

From the foregoing, it can be argued that Governments bypassing regional security organizations hinder their success, as political differences impede strategy and policy formulation for peace and security. IGAD, EAC, and EASF struggle to act independently due to member states' political interests, highlighting the need for unified leadership to strengthen regional peace efforts.

#### **c) Adequacy of Financial Resources**

Respondents noted that the financial capacity, including availability, reliability, and timely

disbursement of funds, significantly influences the implementation of CSI programs and security initiatives in Eastern Africa. Majority of respondents (87.1 %) were of the opinion that financial challenges hinder IGAD from handling complex security operations with 83.9 % of them stating that IGAD had a huge deficit in its operational budget. Additionally, 67.7% of respondents concurred that IGAD over relies on donor funding which is not only insufficient but granted with conditions.

Further, through interviews, the study established that IGAD runs several programmes grouped into various pillars and that the CSI has to solicit donor funding to bridge the fund deficit, which in itself poses challenges.

An interviewee at the IGAD strategic level asserted:

...we carry out several programs and I can tell you that, though insufficient, 70 % of the funds are obtained from donors. Member states' annual contributions are inconsistent. Out of 8 member states, 3 do not consistently contribute, that is Somalia, Eritrea and South Sudan. This now explains why 90% of IGAD's programs are supported by donors. However, donors provide funds based on their interests. This affects the sustainability of the peace and security mandate of IGAD... (IGAD strategic level interviewee 008, 2020).

The study, through EAC interviewees, established that the financial situation of the EAC was unstable because partner states had not been remitting their contributions in time and that the Council of Ministers had not invoked legal provisions to push defaulters to pay. In the words of one interviewee at EAC strategic level:

...the EAC is under financial crisis and the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum through EALA in October 2019 filed a petition recommending the Council of Ministers to consider invoking Article 143 or 146 to impose sanctions against partner states that default on payments because it is tantamount to display of non-commitment to the integration process. EALA also wants the Alternative Financing Mechanism which could include an import levy finalized and effected ... (EAC strategic level interviewee 05, 2020).

These sentiments are indications that EAC cannot fund regional peace initiatives independently due to insufficient donor support. Member states' failure to pay annual contributions makes the EAC budget unsustainable, undermining the CSI's ability to implement its programs.

The issue of financial incapacity was also observed in EASF. A total of 88.2% of respondents viewed EASF member states as unwilling to contribute financially, especially when state interests

are at stake. The same view was also shared by 73.5% of respondents who concurred that EASF funding is mainly from donors. EASF respondents attributed these financial challenges to failure by partner states to honour their financial obligations thereby making the Regional Mechanism seek donor support to implement its regional peace and security initiatives. In addition, EASF respondents acknowledged that while majority of EASF member states were in arrears with their contributions, the CSI lacked modalities of forcing member states to honour payments with donor funds being unsustainable because donors gave funds based on their assessment of what they considered a threat.

The study reveals that IGAD, EAC, and EASF face funding shortages, impacting their regional stabilization efforts. Member states' dependency on donor funding and inadequate contributions compromise the sustainability and ownership of CSI programs. For instance, if member states' assessed contributions cannot fund even half of their annual budgets, ownership of institutional agenda gets compromised. Findings of the current study in regard to financial challenges are in tandem with Badmus (2015) who argues that African regional security organizations are institutionalizing the peace and security arrangements in line with their mandates but have to rely on international partners for funding which compromises ownership of peace and security initiatives.

In contrast, best practices in ECOWAS indicate that the CSI has established a Community Levy. Through this levy, ECOWAS has been able to fund up to 85% of its operational budget. Arthur, (2017) portrays ECOWAS as ahead of the AU in terms of generating resources from member states for its programmes. The EA region has much to learn from other RMs and alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which operate on the principle of common funding where all 30 members contribute according to an agreed cost-sharing formula, based on their Gross National Income (GNI).

From the analysis of the findings, it is evident that IGAD, EAC and EASF are far from being financially independent. The institutions' programs cannot be effectively and locally financed and thus the over-reliance on donor funds. Findings of this study echo provisions of the social constructivism theory that a security structure operates both on material and social components. Lack of a reliable funding stream also hinders implementation of programmes according to set priorities and needs thereby hindering success of peace activities. This goes against effectiveness

of long-term stabilization of the target states.

The implication are that CSI consider to prioritize programmes that address the socio-economic condition of many African states which makes them vulnerable to donor condition-based interventions because of the loans, aid and foreign assistance to poor African nations. This impacts on sustainability, relevance and ownership of peace and security processes at the regional level. The CSI also need to implement strategies that will drive more effective mobilization of funds from member states for effective running of the CSI peace and security programmes and also adopt policies that employ divisions of financial responsibilities according to the abilities of its members.

#### **d) The Regional Hegemony Dilemma**

The study investigated respondent's perspectives concerning the member states power and dominance on one hand and pursuit for peace and security initiatives by all three CSIs on the other. From the findings, a total of 67.7% (IGAD), 72.4% (EAC) and 66.2% (EASF) of respondents consider the Eastern Africa subregion as challenged by state dominance issues and this affects the CSIs in their achievement of stabilization. From interviews, it emerged that the Horn of Africa (HoA) did not have a leading power that could drive IGAD peace and security policies single handedly like is the case for South Africa (SADC) and Nigeria (ECOWAS). Acknowledging that the Eastern Africa sub region lacks a visibly distinct hegemon/lead state, IGAD respondents however intimated that Ethiopia appears to portray a pivotal influence on conflict prevention compared to other members. According to informants from the CSO cohort, Ethiopia's lofty position is evidenced by the conglomeration of security related specialized institutions in the country including IGAD which elevates Ethiopia's pivotal state status.

Interviewees at the EAC cited lack of a hegemonic state negatively impacting the CSI mandate delivery. Additionally, majority of interviewees at the strategic level argued that no EAC partner state had the ability to economically, militarily or diplomatically garner full support of all other member states in pursuit of a common peace agenda. Giving an example of the Burundi crisis, one interviewee drawn from strategic level at the EAC observed:

...during the 2015 Burundi crisis, none of the EAC partner states was able to assert herself in negotiating an acceptable political settlement to the crisis. When negotiations for peace in Burundi began under the EAC auspices, partner states entered into silent alliances based

on interests with Burundi and Tanzania on one hand while Uganda and Rwanda were on the other with Kenya remaining neutral... (EAC strategic level interviewee, 01, 2020).`

This demonstrates the complex states relations in the Great Lakes Region as earlier alluded to. This political schism has had a huge impact on peace and conflict in the region occasioning a spread of alliances to other African counties such as DRC, Angola and South Africa as witnessed in previous regional conflicts.

The study found that the EASF's stabilization efforts are hampered by the absence of a lead state to champion its agenda. Ethiopia and Kenya, potential candidates due to their military, economic, and diplomatic strength, face internal challenges. Ethiopia contends with Somalia's expansionist threat and poor relations with Eritrea, while Kenya grapples with terrorism and a maritime dispute with Somalia. Additionally, CSO interviewees noted that silent supremacy wars, rivalry, and suspicion among EASF member states undermine institutional cohesion and prompt decision-making during conflicts.

This study findings are in consonance with a study by Adetula *et al.*, (2016) who posits that suspicion and rivalry within IGAD compromises achievement of IGAD's peace and security mandate while Ethiopia is seen as dominating the CSI. For instance, the 2006 intervention by Ethiopia in Somalia to annihilate the ICU militia was a unilateral move yet it was backed by IGAD. This was a non- authorized military intervention and Ethiopia justified its legitimacy on the grounds of its right to individual and collective self- defence against a terrorist threat and as a reply to an invitation from a legitimate government. Somalia took the invasion negatively and in response to IGAD's support for Ethiopian intervention, Eritrea suspended its membership in April 2007.

The dominant posture assumed by Ethiopia in terms of being home to numerous institutions is also noted by El-Fassi and Maru (2015) who write that Ethiopia hosts the AU Headquarters for the Peace and Security Committee and has chaired IGAD since 2008, it has been elected three times as member of the PSC and has influence on the AU organs and representative of AU Member States in Addis Ababa. In addition, Ethiopia hosts a number of IGAD offices and specialized institutions and thus apparently seems better suited to push the IGAD regional mandate.

Bayeh (2015) also identified lack of a regional hegemon, overlapping membership into other RECs

and lack of funding as factors affecting the EASF in pursuit of regional peace. The study findings are in consonance with those of Thobejane and Yitay (2018) who contend that Kenya and Ethiopia stand out as pivotal states to push the regional stabilization agenda but engagement with internal issues including terrorism and border disputes deter their assertiveness. From the above findings, it could therefore be inferred that no single IGAD, EAC or EASF member state has come out to take up political and military accountability for peace and security in the Eastern Africa subregion and this affects prompt decision-making required whenever conflict arises.

#### **e) Weak Policies**

A total of 66.7 % of respondents reported that IGAD lacks effective and efficient policies to mitigate against regional insecurity. These sentiments were shared by 95.5% and 80.6% of EAC and EASF respondents respectively. Further analysis centred on respondents views on the soundness of defence and security policy of IGAD, EAC and EASF. A total of 69.7 % of respondents (IGAD), 83.4 % (EAC) and 61.7 % (EASF) stated that the respective CSIs did not have a sound defence policy for intervention in regional conflict.

Interviews revealed IGAD prioritizes conflict management over long-term prevention. The existing defense policy is managerial, not preventive. Without a Common Peace and Security Policy, IGAD states respond to threats on an ad hoc basis rather than a unified regional approach.

Study findings revealed that the East African Community (EAC) lacks strong policies for conflict intervention. Despite having an early warning system, defence cooperation, and preventive diplomacy on paper, these systems are weak and non-operational. The EAC lacks a comprehensive defence policy, with the Mutual Defence Pact still unratified by all partner states. Draft policies on illegal drug trafficking, terrorism, refugees, and maritime security exist but face implementation challenges due to resource scarcity. Thus, the study established that the CSI had not operationalized the EAC Peace and Security Protocol. Elucidating challenges related to the implementation of a mutual defence pact, an interviewee at the EAC strategic level had this to say:

...institutionally, the EAC has different member states (compared to IGAD and EASF) with different structures of addressing peace and security. Basically, therefore, the EAC is a collection entity whose implementation of policies is by bilateral partnership. Implementing a comprehensive defence policy for the EAC could be impeded by the fact that each EAC member state has its own unique security history... (EAC strategic level

interviewee 04, 2020).

Despite the above challenges, progressive efforts bringing together relevant agencies in the military, police and judiciary have been ongoing in the EAC to implement the EAC Mutual Defence Protocol and Mutual Peace and Security Protocol. A number of EAC military exercises, for instance, have been undertaken to improve mutual operability.

Interviewees indicated that the East African Standby Force (EASF) lacks a clear conflict intervention policy, with decisions driven by politics rather than necessity or threats. Implementation of its defence policy is hindered by differing military doctrines and member states' reluctance to delegate sovereign security interests to a supranational body. These findings are in concurrence with a study by Miranyi (2018) who points out the need to harmonize operational structures at the EASF and fast track policy approval by member states to enable joint implementation and to gain from integration, create synergy and enhance the CSI effectiveness, and that for a defence policy to be effective and efficient, it should be geared more towards prevention rather than erratic response to conflict.

The study found that IGAD, EAC, and EASF face implementation challenges due to resource constraints and differing military doctrines. Existing peace and conflict policies focus more on conflict management than prevention. Effective CPMR and peace-building are hindered by the low capacity of CSIs. For sustainable stabilization, CSIs need to build durable capacity and secure political commitment from member states for harmonized policy implementation.

#### **f) Inadequate Legal Framework**

The study established that 86.9% (IGAD), 86.4% (EAC) and 64 % (EASF) of respondents were of the view that a legal framework to support the respective CSIs in their endeavour to achieve peace and security in the East African subregion existed. However, through indepth key informant interviews, it emerged that the existing legal framework was ineffective and not responsive to the current realities. For instance, interviewees drawn from strategic level staff at IGAD observed that the applicable legal framework did not have a strong requirement to commit member states to the IGAD mandate. This was evident in cases where member states failed to honour obligations to the IGAD kitty and there being no legal provisions, making them pay up was not possible and neither were there any applicable sanctions. The interviewees further reported that IGAD lacked

an effective legal framework guiding the CSI chairmanship and even convening of Summits. Similar sentiments were raised by interviewees drawn from the EAC who affirmed that the CSI lacked a binding legal reference that could enforce membership commitment to the Community's agreements. Key informants indicated that the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security was yet to be institutionalized and its ratification by the member states was slow. They attributed this to sovereignty issues, lack of political commitment from partner states and resource constraints. An interviewee at EAC strategic level further explained:

...member states have not fully ratified the EAC protocol on peace and security. This is because states may be politically uncomfortable to cede their sovereignty and individual security interests to a joint collective security arrangement. Although the EAC protocol is a good framework, the EAC lacks sufficient financial resources, adequate public participation and enough consensus from member states for its ratification and hence the failure to operationalize the protocol ... (EAC strategic level interviewee, 01, 2020)

Interviews revealed that EASF operates under outdated policies from 2004 and 2005, lacking legal provisions for mandatory contributions or troop deployment. The Agreement on Establishment of EASF (2014), addressing funding and logistics, relies heavily on member states' political goodwill, impacting its effectiveness. Findings in this study echo Byiers (2016) who avers that the lack of a robust legal basis for staff appointments is manifest in the office of the IGAD Executive Secretary which is a political appointment. Noting that CSIs in the subregion have not implemented tangible strategies to mitigate conflicts, Byiers (2016) observes that although frameworks for regional cooperation are in place, regional integration and conflict prevention has been poor. Further, Kidane (2018) argues that ensuring fairness and putting in place working legal frameworks will be pivotal in ensuring successes of RECS.

The study findings are also in agreement with Manyolo (2017) who argues that the East African Protocol on Peace and Security lacked the necessary buy - in from politicians and the public (especially marginalized communities) and the necessary institutional framework for its implementation. Elowson and Lins de Albuquerque (2017) also contends that one of the obstacles to effective EASF's intervention in Burundi conflict was the weak legal framework asserting that the EASF policy framework had been structured on a non-binding MoU and thus, had less legal basis to compel members to contribute to EASF, or to enforce peace and security.

It may thus be argued that the CSIs lack robust legal provisions which can be used to compel member states to commit themselves to regional stabilization initiatives. Equally, there is no strong legal backing that can be invoked by IGAD, EAC and EASF to deploy forces or intervene in conflict without the consent of the host nation and member states. The weak legal frameworks greatly undermine IGAD, EAC and EASF by not committing member states to organizational goals thereby affecting the achievement of their objectives.

## **Conclusion**

This study anchored on the question of elusive peace and security in the EA region despite the existing CSIs with direct mandates to establish peace. It provides a situational analysis reflecting the dismal performance of the CSIs focusing on their structural and institutional frameworks. Through the lens of the Regional Security Complex theory, the shortcomings of the three entities are explored and analysed. From the findings of this study, it emerged that achievement of effective conflict resolution in the EA region by IGAD, EAC and EASF was hampered largely by structural and institutional bottlenecks. These include thematic and geographic overlaps, a common feature in IGAD, EAC and EASF resulting into competition over scarce resources, financial over stretch and divided loyalties. A general lack of political commitment on agreed treaties and policies by member states coupled with unclear and non-binding legal frameworks, financial and human resource constraints, over reliance on donor funds, weak logistical capacity, cumbersome bureaucracy as well as heavy political interference and lack of a lead state to provide unity of direction largely hampered implementation of the CSIs policies and subdued regional stabilization programmes. The next section considers emergent policy recommendations and makes some suggestions for future research.

## **Policy Recommendations, Caveats and Future Research Initiatives**

In a region characterized by endemic conflict and where close to 50% of the countries rank high on the fragility index heavily impacting negatively on development, there is an urgent need for a structured institutional CSI framework that encompasses multidimensional approaches of diplomacy, security and development to effectively manage security threats and conflicts. In this regard, the ongoing AU efforts to align APSA with RECs should address overlaps through tapping on areas of comparative advantage and specialization. This paper suggests that streamlining of

mandates will be required to achieve an effective peace and security structure. In light of this, the following recommendations are thus proposed:

- To eliminate overlaps in mandate, IGAD should be reconfigured to specialize on peace and conflicts in the Horn of Africa while EAC leverages on its economic integration experience and inter-state cohesion to strengthen member states commitment to mutual peace and security pact and mutual defence agreements. EASF can be advanced as a specialized PSO (Peace Support Operation) tool for peacekeeping and peace enforcement in the sub region.
- The study recommends Kenya adopt a more assertive foreign policy to strengthen IGAD's response to regional threats, emphasizing strong institutionalization, resourcing, and leadership. Kenya's pivotal location positions it to lead and galvanize state cooperation in crises.
- The AU's financial autonomy initiative should be fast-tracked, with EAC, IGAD, and EASF developing local fundraising strategies like ECOWAS. This will boost accountability, reduce donor dependency, and increase autonomy in peace and security agendas. Enhancing legal and political compliance, basing decision-making quorums on paid memberships, and granting veto powers to well-paying members will incentivize adherence to agreements.
- On new research initiatives, comparative studies between the regions' mechanisms and other region's structures will unearth weaknesses and direct efforts to more feasible approaches. For instance, a study between IGAD and ECOWAS could bring to the fore contextual and institutional factors that determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the latter's performance despite its myriad concerns.

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