The African Union (AU)
Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)
Framework: The First Ten Years

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Introduction

The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2002 and the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), represents a normative shift from state centrism to human security. This transformation has brought about significant improvements in the capacity of the AU to enhance peace, security, governance and sustainable development. In particular, these developments introduced new pathways and opportunities for a unique African approach to peacebuilding.

Since 2002, the AU has expanded its normative frameworks, strengthened its institutional capacity, and deployed more than 10 political and peace support missions across the continent, as well as more than a dozen special envoys, mediators and fact-finding missions (see Table 1). At the same time, the AU formed new cooperative partnerships with the United Nations; the European Union; international financial institutions including the African Development Bank; businesses and private sector organisations; and African civil society and think tanks.

In this context, the adoption of the AU's Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy framework in 2006, in The Gambia, represents a milestone in the AU efforts to coordinate and support peacebuilding processes in Africa. The AU Commission, Member States and partners, including African civil society and think tanks, met from the 19th to 21st of October 2016, to reflect on the first ten years of the PCRD framework and identify

priorities for the AU's peacebuilding work over the coming decade. This paper, which provides a background to the discussion on the first decade of the PCRD framework, reflects on the institutional and normative underpinnings of the AU's peacebuilding work and analyses the experiences of the AU's peacebuilding activities to date. It concludes with a number of policy recommendations for strengthening the PCRD over the next five years.

Normative and Institutional foundations of the AU PCRD framework

When the AU PCRD framework was adopted in July 2006, there was a range of views on how peacebuilding should be understood and implemented in Africa and globally. For instance, the creation of the UN Peacebuilding architecture in late 2005 reflected the needs identified by the international community to maintain international attention on peace processes after peace agreements were implemented, as a way of helping to ensure that these peace processes are consolidated.[2] Also, the AU PCRD framework was created within the context of creating a structure that could focus on implementing a range of activities that would address the causes and drivers of conflict, with the aim of reducing the risk of peace processes relapsing into violent conflict.[3]

The view of peacebuilding as a set of tools that help to consolidate a peace process has been heavily influenced, both at the UN and AU levels, by Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 (and 1999 update) Agenda for Peace conceptual framework. Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace focused on the fact that responses would first try to prevent conflict (preventive diplomacy). If it was unable to prevent a conflict, the UN would negotiate a cease-fire and peace agreement (peacemaking) and deploy a mission to help the parties to the conflict to implement these agreements (peacekeeping). Once the agreements had been implemented and the fighting has come to an end, processes would be designed to help to consolidate the peace and help to prevent a relapse into violent conflict (peacebuilding). Those would include assisting the parties with revisiting their constitution (if that is what was agreed), holding elections, reconciliation, reforming the state and disarming and demobilizing the combatants.

While in the early 2000s peacebuilding initiatives have adopted approaches that were largely based on linear and chronological understanding of responses, more recently, this type of responses has been questioned. Today, peacebuilding and PCRD are seen as much more than simply a range of post-conflict projects and initiatives. Instead it is understood as a conjunction of non-linear, highly complex, multidimensional and long-term processes that are essentially political and local, and that is aimed at sustaining peace before, during and after conflicts. More recent approaches move away from a chronological model and recognise that, in most cases, elements of prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have to be undertaken at the same time.

For instance, during the implementation of peacekeeping operations, some form of peacemaking negotiations usually continues to address post-settlement issues. Also, there is an increasing realization that peacebuilding is ultimately about prevention of conflicts. Peacebuilding is thus intrinsically a long-term process, where a variety of interlinked strategies and plans are developed, implemented and sustained, dealing with those conditions that assist countries to sustain their peace processes. Thus, peacebuilding is not just about identifying and addressing conflict drivers or its root causes to prevent relapse, but it is about identifying, and supporting the drivers that sustain peace.

Peacebuilding has been increasingly seen as a part of a broad collective approach under which the political, security, rule of law, governance, human rights and development dimensions of international interventions could be brought together under common strategic frameworks. This nexus between development, governance, justice, politics and security is now widely accepted as critical for the success of international effort in assisting countries to achieve sustainable peace. This view was reflected in the agreement to include a goal to this effect in the new Sustainable Development Goals.[4]

Peacebuilding is thus no longer seen as a set of tools or activities that come at the end of the process, but rather as an umbrella concept under which the range of interventions the international community would normally engage in to support a state in crisis could be coordinated to ensure that peace is sustained. In this context peacebuilding is limited to

those activities that fall within the AU's PCRD framework or those activities that fall within the UN's peacebuilding architecture, but is rather understood collectively as all the efforts of the AU or UN system that contribute to sustaining the peace in a given context.

This broader understanding of peacebuilding can be reflected in the different review processes conducted by the UN in 2015, which called for a full-spectrum approach to peace operations and for the importance of providing emphasis on the goals of sustaining peace. Those reviews, while directly focusing at UN responses, are particularly relevant in the process of identifying how to enhance AU PCRD's effective implementation. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding, has summarized the "sustaining peace" concept as follows:

> "...the 'sustaining peace' approach seeks...to move beyond looking at peace and conflict in a sectorial way. Instead, it advocates more flexible, content appropriate and demand-driven approaches, while acknowledging peacebuilding as a political activity that must avoid templates, formulas and one-size-fits-all solutions.
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> Sustaining peace also requires breaking silos and combatting fragmentation at the intergovernmental, strategic and operational levels including in the field; further exploring the interlinkages between the political and security, development and human rights pillars...and emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and people-centered approaches for successful peacebuilding.
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> The notion of peacebuilding as a thread running throughout the life cycle of conflicts resonates throughout the resolutions. Peacebuilding is no longer a set of specific tasks and interventions. Rather, it is connected to conflict prevention and peacekeeping, with a view to making, building, keeping and sustaining peace in an efficient, integrated and cost-effective manner."[5]

As Youssef Mahmoud and Andrea Ó Súilleabháin have noted, this new expansive definition of peacebuilding recognises that sustaining peace is an inherently political process that spans prevention, mediation, conflict management, and resolution. They argue that with the sustaining peace concept, peacebuilding now puts member states and their populations in the lead; it further puts politics and political solutions front and center, gives prevention an uncontested home, and leverages the three pillars—human rights, peace and security, and development—in a mutually reinforcing way.[6]

Another conceptual development that needs to be highlighted is the shift from understanding peacebuilding as something that is essentially programmatic to something that is essentially political. In the early years, there was an assumption that one of the benefits of peacebuilding is that it would result in more development resources flowing to those countries particularly on the peacebuilding agenda. This resulted in a peacebuilding narrative that often reflected donor nomenclature, and reduced peacebuilding to something technical and programmatic; making peacebuilding approaches less relevant for non-Western countries.

In the past years, this understanding of peacebuilding has gradually changed, and by 2015 the view that peacebuilding is essentially political and local had gained ground. Over this period, what was understood as the essential added value of external peacebuilding support had also shifted from resource mobilization to political accompaniment. This new understanding was partially informed by the failures of the largely top-down " technical-programmatic" approach to peacebuilding and statebuilding, and the relapses in the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea-Bissau, Timor-Leste, and South Sudan.[7]

The AU's PCRD framework foresaw many of these developments and provides for a strong emphasis on a comprehensive approach, national ownership and the essentially political nature of peacebuilding. However, the implementation of the PCRD framework also suffered from a pre-occupation with resource mobilization and a view that saw PCRD as essentially about projects aimed at addressing PCRD needs.

One of the elements that make the PCRD concept uniquely African is its emphasis on intra-African solidarity. For the AU, peacebuilding is not only about an external actor assisting a local process, but approaches the process as being essentially locally led. This provides the opportunity for the AU to facilitate African solidarity as a means to support local communities and national institutions, the ones ultimately responsible for managing their own peace process. In this context, the role of the AU is to support, empower and enable local actors and to assist them to best harness the knowledge and support of the AU, regional

bodies, fellow African member states and African civil society.

These changes in understanding what peacebuilding is and where it is situated are now widely accepted by many in the field. In practice, however, many peacebuilding efforts have remained ineffective globally. In fact, after many years of steady decline, the number of violent conflicts is now, in fact, rising again.[8] In 2015, the UN appointed Advisory Group of Experts that reviewed its peacebuilding architecture reported that there are critical challenges faced by peacebuilding globally, particularly in relation to the fact that it is widely under-prioritized, under-resourced and underfunded at all levels.[9]

Ten years after its adoption, the AU PCRD, like its global counterparts, has inadequate capacity and resources to effectively carry out its mandate. The PCRD framework should be firmly anchored on the APSA with the aim of ensuring that it serves as the bridge between Africa and global peacebuilding community system.

Approaches and Progress in AU PCRD Policy Implementation

Since the adoption of the PCRD policy, the AU has implemented the PCRD in a number of ways. First, it has undertaken a number of needs assessment missions, multidisciplinary in nature, aiming to identify peacebuilding needs and priorities. Those missions, conducted between 2006 and 2011, currently guide the AU's response strategies, including the need for mobilization of expertise and resources.

This resulted in the identification of joint activities in support of implementation of peace agreements in Member States emerging from conflict and conducting needs assessment missions, consolidating and up-scaling security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives, sustained collaboration with Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms as well as civil society organizations.[10] Most recently the AUC has started to revisit and update these needs assessments. In August 2016, the first needs assessment was undertaken in CAR, and more are planned.

Second, the AU has engaged in developing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), as a tool to assist AU liaison offices, AU Special Political Missions and AU Peace Support Operations to undertake local targeted PCRD interventions that can unblock or otherwise assist peace or transition processes.

Third, the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) is an AU-led process for mobilizing support from within the continent for countries emerging from conflict. The ASI mobilize in-kind, capacity building, as well as financial contributions, to support reconstruction activities and efforts in the African countries concerned. It is thus a South-South, peer-to-peer inter-African initiative. Botswana's Finance Minister, Kenneth Matambo, notes that the ASI could "make a major contribution to capacity-building among the target post-conflict populations, as well as facilitating experience-sharing across all areas of development."[11]

Since 2014, the PSC has requested more support for PCRD initiatives, conducting more regular meetings pertaining to PCRD matters. These are seen as critical tools in achieving the AU's vision presented in Agenda 2063, and a means of achieving its goal of 'Silencing the Guns by 2020'.[12]

In 2016, the development of a roadmap for APSA emphasized the necessity for the AUC to strengthen its cooperation with RECs and AU member states to ensure optimal implementation of the PCRD policy. This is against the backdrop that the RECs have an enormous potential in furthering engagements regarding PCRD matters and in strengthening Africa's peacebuilding architecture. RECs, as the building blocks of the AU, are intended to enhance regional integration but increasingly work in areas such as peace and security, development and governance. However, the principle of subsidiarity is often not clearly understood and the different roles of the AU and RECs could be further refined. What would these roles be? How can they be enhanced?

New developments around peacebuilding at the UN show interest and an inclination of further engagements with the AU. The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) funding for AU Human

Rights Observers in Burundi is seen as an important new space in which both the AU and the UN can further engage.[13] This is the first time that the PBF has funded AU activities, and follows calls from the UN General Assembly and Security Council to ensure there is closer collaboration and partnership between the AU and the UN on peacebuilding as a means to increase effective support in peacebuilding contexts.[14] The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the AU Peace and Security Council are also exploring how they can better coordinate the strategic and political approaches of the UN and the AU in the area of peacebuilding and PCRD.

New Opportunities for PCRD and CSO engagement

Since its adoption, AU PCRD has faced an interesting dichotomy. From a policy and normative point of view, the PCRD policy became one of the most comprehensive and inclusive peacebuilding policies globally.[15] However from an implementation point of view, PCRD is still lagging behind and needs further support from AU member states.[16]

As mentioned above, challenges in implementing peacebuilding initiatives are not unique to the AU. Generally, peacebuilding actors often focus too much on short-term gains rather than long-term engagement.[17] This leads to peacebuilding responses that do not reflect a critical assessment and analysis of the underlying dynamics, lacks realistic planning and suffers from unrealistic indicators for progress. It would be important for the AU, especially in those countries where it has a presence, such as in the Central African Republic (CAR), Burundi, Mali and Somalia, to identify those areas where the AU and African peers can make important and catalytic contributions to the countries peacebuilding objectives.

While conceptually there is an increasing acceptance that peacebuilding makes part of a broader umbrella of responses and goals, in reality most responses are still structured in a more linear bureaucratic fashion. The establishment of an inter-departmental Task Force at the AU on PCRD in 2016 has already helped to increase internal coordination.[18]

The Task Force will fill a critical gap related to intra and inter-departmental linkages at the AU. As the AU PCRD gains further momentum within the AU Commission, it is hoped that this will trickle down by enhancing internal collaboration and practices across the AU Commission and offices. The interdepartmental Task Force certainly provides opportunities for a more integrated response from within the AUC. The question however is how to ensure that this is done effectively as part of a broader continental architecture?

In view of the magnitude and complex challenges of PCRD, more attention must be given to coherence and coordination of all actors to enhance synergy of actions, integrated planning and operations.[19] Effective implementation of the PCRD policy and support to post-conflict countries will require close coordination both at the policy and operational level.

To this end, the AU is now engaging with the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, the UN agencies and programmes working in Africa, African civil society organisations and think tanks, international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and other AU partners.[20]

In this context, one issue that needs to be addressed relates to the role of civil society in supporting the development of coordinated peacebuilding responses in Africa. However, to concretely engage with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and think tanks on their evolving role within an emerging African peacebuilding architecture, several issues in respect of shared understanding of roles and responsibilities are pertinent.

First, a key challenge is that peacebuilding responses in general are often disconnected from the everyday realities in the communities; local civil society can potentially help to bridge this gap. Organised civil society provides the necessary link and local grounding for the implementation of the AU PCRD policy. Art 20 of the PSC Protocol, that "encourages non-governmental organizations, community-based and other civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa", provides a mandate for the engagement of non-state actors in PCRD processes and activities. Civil society actors, as defined by the AU Economic

Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) statute, should therefore be involved in PCRD activities at all levels, as a way of complementing the capacity of state actors.[21]

Second, with a view of consolidating PCRD implementation by CSOs and think tanks, a platform is being considered. This would enable CSOs, think tanks and the AU to reflect and advance creative joint modalities on how to move forward in addressing the current persisting reality of disjointed and incoherent peacebuilding. It would also allow them to work towards efforts with other peace and security programmes both at the AU, RECs/RMs and member state level for greater impact.

The proposed AU-CSO framework on PCRD will seek to respond to PCRD policy implementation initiatives with a clearer link to the AU PCRD policy, with civil society and think tanks undertaking activities such as generating information and analysis in support of PCRD processes; undertaking within their capability and expertise, PCRD activities as defined within the national framework; partnering with national authorities in all aspects of PCRD to build and enhance capacity and accelerating realization of PCRD objectives; engaging in advocacy in support of the national PCRD programme and activities; mobilizing resources for PCRD; and raising awareness and popularizing the contents of PCRD policies and strategies.[22]

Recommendations for a more effective PCRD

The following recommendations are offered with the aim of further enhancing the effectiveness of the AU's approach to peacebuilding:

Conceptual Clarity: The AU should work towards ensuring that there is a shared understanding of PCRD across the AUC, between the PSC and the AUC, between the AUC and RECs/RMs, and within Africa broadly, including within Members States and Civil Society. A shared understanding of PCRD as a solidarity-based African peer-to-

peer knowledge exchange and political accompaniment process in order to sustain peace will assist greatly in unity of effort among these broad range of actors.

Predictable Funding: In order to ensure that there is predictable funding for PCRD initiatives and, therefore consistent engagement from the AU on peacebuilding processes, the AU Peace Fund should include specific funding for PCRD activities in Window 1 (Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation) and Window 3 (Peace Support Operations). These can be carried out as Quick Impact Projects – which is recommended to be re-formulated as broader PCRD projects – by AU Liaison Offices, Special Political Missions and Peace Support Operations. In addition, the Peace Fund should enable partners to pledge support for PCRD projects and initiatives via the Peace Fund.

PCRD Needs Assessments: The PCRD needs of states recovering from conflict or otherwise in transition should be assessed regularly and systematically, to better inform peacebuilding planning. PCRD Needs Assessments need to be informed by ongoing conflict or risk analysis and used to effectively identify areas of responses and support to peacebuilding processes. The AUC and its field missions should assist national authorities and local peacebuilding actors to take the lead in undertaking conflict or risk analysis and needs assessments.

AUC System approach to Peacebuilding: The AUC needs to further institutionalize the inter-departmental task force structure, and the task force should work closely together with the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD in Africa. The AUC should, under the political guidance of the PSC, adopt an AU-wide holistic of system-wide approach to peacebuilding, where all the complementary activities of the AUC, across the peace, security, development and economic spectrum, are harnessed to sustain the peace in its Member States.

African Solidarity: There is a need to establish appropriate PCRD implementation mechanisms, nationally and locally led; and appropriate PCRD implementation

mechanisms at RECs/RMs level to complement the AUC and PSC structures. Regular knowledge and strategic planning exchanges between the AUC, the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa will enhance the knowledge on peacebuilding in Africa and ensure that the AUC, AfDB and ECA share its analysis and needs assessments of the countries at risk.

International Coherence: Likewise, there is a need to ensure that the AU approach to peacebuilding is informed by and informs directly the latest international developments and innovations, without loosing the unique identity of the PCRD principles and approach. The AUC should remain closely in touch with the relevant UN peacebuilding instruments, including the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and Peacebuilding Fund. In addition, the AUC should engage with the Word Bank, European Union, the New Development Bank (NDB) and other international centres of knowledge on peacebuilding. The PSC should continue with, and further enhance, its strategic and political level engagement with the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

Act as a catalyst for strengthening of national peace infrastructures: The theatre of tangible PCRD interventions remains the national spaces where lasting cultures of peace need to be cultivated between and among different groupings that have conflicts. In recent years most notably from 2013, the AUC has explored the feasibility and modalities of building and strengthening national infrastructures for peace and establishing linkages and synergies between the national, regional, and continental efforts in conflict prevention. The AUC should consolidate gains made in the consultations it has already had with RECs and national governments and continue providing support that can enable the realization of effective national infrastructures for peace in Africa.

Annex A

Table 1: African Union political and peace operations: 2002-2016[23]

Mission	Duration	Troop strength, police and civilian components

African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB)	April 2003 – June 2004	Approximately 3,000 troops and 20 civilians
Economic Community Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL)	September 2003 – October 2003	Approximately 3,500 troops
African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS)	September 2004 - July 2007	Approximately 7,000 troops and 50 civilians
African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	January 2007 -	Approximately 22,200 troops; 400 police and 50 civilians
African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES) / Operation Democracy	May 2007 – October 2008	Approximately 1,500 troops
United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	July 2007 -	Approximately 15,800 troops; 3,400 police and approximately 1240 civilians
Regional Task Force of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)	March 2012 -	Approximately 8000 troops
African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)	December 2012 – July 2013	Approximately 7,400 troops and 50 civilians
African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL)	October 2014 -	Human Rights Observers and civilian staff
African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA)	December 2013 - September 2014	Approximately 6,000 troops and 50 civilians

| African Union Mission for CAR and Central Africa (MISAC) | October 2014 - | Civilian staff |
| Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Lake Chad Basin Commission against Boko Haram | 29 January 2015 - | Approximately 8,700 troops |

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[2] Cedric de Coning and Eli Stamnes, 2016, *The UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The First 10 Years* (Routledge: London).

[3] Barnett, M., Kim, H., O'Donnell, M. and Sitea, L. 2007. Peacebuilding: what is in a name? *Global Governance*, 13 (1), pp. 35-58

[4] Goal 16 of the new Sustainable Development Goals aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

[5] Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, "Sustaining Peace is a Core Activity of the UN", CIC Global Peace Operations Review, 28 April 2016.

[6] Youssef Mahmoud and Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, 'With New Resolutions, Sustaining Peace Sits at Heart of UN Architecture', IPI Global Observatory, 29 April 2016.

[7] de Coning & Stames, 2016, p. 261.

[8] Cilliers, Jakkie. Future (im) perfect? Mapping Conflict, Extremism and Violence in Africa. Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Paper 287, October 2015, Available at https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/Paper287-1.pdf

[9] United Nations Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, 29 June 2015, available at http://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/07/300615_The-Challenge-of-Sustaining-Peace.pdf

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[13] AU Peace and Security Council, Press release on PBF support to AU in Burundi: UN Peacebuilding Fund finances African Union human rights observers in Burundi, 3 May 2016, available at http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/press-release-on-pbf-support-to-au-in-burundi-un-peacebuilding-fund-finances-african-union-human-rights-observers-in-burundi#sthash.dui4JcY2.dpuf

[14] UN Security Council Resolution, UN/Res/2282, 27 April 2016.

[15] Institute for Security Studies. Peace and Security Council Report. Issue 80, May 2016, available at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/PSC80.pdf

[16] Ibid.

[17] Gustavo de Carvalho and Onnie Kok, Does anyone know what good peacebuilding looks like?, *ISS Today*, 24 February 2016, available at https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/does-anyone-know-what-good-peacebuilding-looks-like

[18] AU Peace and Security Council, Remarks By Dr Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Head Crisis Management and Post Conflict and Reconstruction Division, AU Commission roundtable on developing a roadmap and inter-departmental task force for the implementation of AU PCRD Policy, 18 May 2016, available at http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/remarks-by-dr-alhaji-sarjoh-bah-head-crisis-management-and-post-conflict-and-reconstruction-division-au-commission-roundtable-on-developing-a-roadmap-and-inter-departmental-task-force-for-the-implementation-of-au-pcrd-policy?utm_source=Email_marketing&utm_campaign=Thursday_May_19_2016_-_1&cmp=1&utm_medium=HTMLEmail#sthash.5VAQkKuO.fjJvrf23.dpuf

[19] African Union, African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Roadmap 2016-2020, 2015, p.9.

[20] Ibid.

[21] AU PCRD Policy (2006), para 58.

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[22] AU PCRD Policy (2006), para 59.

[23] Developed from table 1.1 in Cedric de Coning, Linnea Gelot & John Karlsrud, 2016, *The Future of African Peace Operations: From Janjaweed to Boko Haram* (Zed Books: London).