

“Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020”

Through measures for dialogue-oriented conflict prevention and resolution, all weapons on the African continent shall remain silent by 2020.

The Challenge

Violent conflicts are still widely prevalent on the African continent and a main obstacle to the peaceful continental economic and political integration. Therefore, the AU Member States declared in their 50th Solemn Declaration “not to bequeath the burden of wars to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars in Africa by the year 2020”. In this regard, the Silencing the Guns initiative is implemented at the level of the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and civil society actors and thereby actively contributes to reducing violent conflict on the continent.

Though there are many efforts to end violence and conflicts throughout the continent, the African Union’s efforts in conflict prevention and conflict resolution are only marginally known to the African people. The project will therefore seek to bring the AUC closer to the African population in AU Member States. In addition, sensitizing citizens on the Silencing the Guns initiative aims to increase their awareness of and participation in AU activities related to sustainable peace.

Our Approach

To promote the achievement of the AU’s initiative “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” the project supports the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a continental awareness-raising campaign by AUC on Silencing the Guns in Africa.

Project name	Support to the AU initiative “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020”
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Lead executing agency	African Union Commission (AUC)
Project region	Africa, supra-regional
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Measures of the campaign include the development and dissemination of information and outreach materials (publications, brochures, videos, etc.), the conception and execution of workshops, events and roadshows as well as the interaction with African citizens through social media. To further ensure that the voices of the population are considered, the engagement of civil society actors, Member States, RECs and AUC will be promoted. In order to provide professional support to the campaign, the project contracted an external communication company that works closely with the AUC in developing target-oriented communication products and also supports the monitoring of the project’s success, for instance through measuring the size of audience reached by the awareness-raising campaign.



Photo on the left: StG at First Consultative Meeting of Regional Women, Peace and Security Forums, Ouagadougou, May 2019 © GIZ

Photo on the right: StG team at first operational planning workshop, Addis Ababa, May 2019 © GIZ



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Photo on the left: Sebastian Kuhn, David Nii Addy and Aïssatou Hayatou at AUC for operational planning workshop, May 2019 © GIZ

Photo on the right: First Consultative Meeting in Ouagadougou, May 2019 © GIZ

Impact and Outlook

Recently, the AU has taken many steps in the right direction which will contribute to peace and security on the continent. For instance, to build and promote a culture of peace and tolerance the AU launched a media campaign that reached out to African citizens in Member States, especially the youth, but also to the African diaspora. In addition, the AU declared the month of September of each year until 2020 as the African Amnesty Month for the surrender and collection of illicit arms and light weapons (SALW). Furthermore, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution that outlined steps leading towards the goal of ending conflict in Africa through enhanced international cooperation and partnership as well as robust support for peace operations led by the African Union.

During his recent briefing at the UN Security Council's Open Debate on Silencing the Guns in Africa on 27 February 2019, H.E Mr. Ramtane Lamamra mentioned that "notable progress has been made in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa", highlighting "the recently concluded peace agreements in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic, the successful democratic elections in Madagascar and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the historic positive developments in the Horn of Africa, [which] are all generating optimism about a continent emerging from the shadows and moving steadily to restore peace and stability and make a decisive move towards integration".

"Silencing the Guns" being the AU Theme of the Year for 2020, throughout the year a strong focus will lie on the implementation of the measures and activities linked to the AU flagship initiative. In the upcoming months, events, side-events and media features will be organized, developed and disseminated throughout the continent. Especially the collaboration with local radio and television stations, as well as women and youth civil society organisations is envisaged with the objective of reaching as many people as possible in their own languages and in order to start the strife for a more peaceful coexistence from the grassroots. As the deadline for Silencing the Guns is approaching, many new initiatives and actions inspired by the original programme are expected to arise and spread the idea all over Africa.

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