

Annual Regional Security Dialogue:

“News Risks - New Approaches to Collective Security? Southern African perspectives on the political economy of conflicts, interventions and sustainable peace”

Programme

Maputo/ Mozambique, 25th – 27th October 2016

Context

The Southern African region has since independence been referred to as one of the most peaceful parts of the continent. The origin of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a regional stronghold against Apartheid South Africa and the political solidarities of the liberation struggle have provided the region with a strong narrative for integration and cooperation.

Yet, despite comprehensive protocols and agreements, the SADC region faces acute challenges to peace and security characterized by prolonged political and economic crises, tensions between member states, contested elections as well as social discontent and in some cases internal violent protests relating to socio-economic grievances, corruption allegations and a feeling of democratic exclusion. In addition to these threats arising from challenges of economic and political governance, there are also new phenomena putting security, safety and social peace at risk in the region. Namely, transnationally organized criminal syndicates and their tentative of state capture, illicit financial and trade flows as well as the threat of terrorist activities and cyberattacks.

In dealing with these threats, the demands of sovereignty and ‘national interest’ sometimes hindered a frank analysis of common threats as well as effective joint action. But even when political consensus is reached, experience has proven that there is no one-fits-all approach that would turn the complexity and interlinkages of new and old security threats into sustainable peace, as resurgent tensions between former war factions after a period of peace or sudden violent social uprisings showed in the recent past.

How can we get a more adequate picture of the root causes of insecurity and the complex web of interactions and interests in the region? Economics matter, but in what direction and what kind of economics? How is the demand- and how the supply-side involved in today’s conflicts? What are the main drivers of unrest in the region? What is the relationship/s between development options, democracy and conflict? How do neoliberal economic policy, foreign aid and international financial institutions contribute to the picture? Are the current strategies of conflict management adequate for the situations of insecurity? How to better prepare the SADC and APSA structures to deal collectively with the causes of insecurity? Where are the gaps and how could they be addressed?

SADSEM

*The Southern African Defence and
Security Management Network*



The annual security dialog, organized by Southern African Defence and Security Management Network (SADSEM) and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)'s Maputo office, wants to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and drivers of violent conflicts and insecurity in the region. The international conference brings together security practitioners, policy makers as well as academics from security studies and social science to jointly analyze the causes and enabling environments for conflicts, the lessons learned from current interventions and joint actions as well as alternatives to address the gaps and shortcomings in preventive diplomacy and joint action for sustainable peace from the regional perspective of Southern Africa.

