

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLICE TRAINING:
PRACTICAL AREAS OF EXTERNAL INITIATIVES AND ASSISTANCE¹

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INTRODUCTION

1. International police cooperation is not a new phenomenon. For instance, Sajo (2003) cites Deflem (2002), as arguing that international police cooperation is rooted not only in history and sociology, but also in inter-governmental relations, that is, in the broader international security system and, in other words, in international relations.² However, the trans-national nature of crime, largely influenced by globalisation, has underscored the need for greater collaboration among law enforcement agencies. It is, therefore, no surprise that we are witnessing an increase and growing interest in international police collaboration, especially because the ease with which people move between countries also implies easier corridors for criminals to move from one country and region to another.

2. In the context of Southern Africa, Kenny Kapinga³ has argued that while the advent of democracy in 1994 opened up South Africa to the rest of the world, the same development did create a synergy to strengthen law enforcement cooperation. This synergy was concretised during the Senior Executive Police Management Seminar in Swaziland in 1994 that led eventually to the establishment of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation, SARPCCO, at the Victoria Falls, in 1995. It is relevant to the discourse of the symposium that the core objectives of SARPCCO include:

"promote, strengthen and perpetuate cooperation and foster joint strategies for the management of all forms of cross-border related crimes with regional implications ...

SARPCCO seeks to also:

"formulate systematic regional police training policies and strategies taking into account the needs and performance requirements of the regional police services / forces."⁴

3. International cooperation in police training is therefore an element, an important element, of this age-old paradigm. The rationale and structures for and approaches in international

cooperation in police training should therefore be contextualised within international police cooperation.

4. In this essay, I seek to present a synopsis of the rationale for international cooperation, focussing on related events on the African continent. Concurring with Deflem (2001), I cite critical dimensions, such as issues and areas that underscore the need for international police cooperation. I then proceed to use these as basis for a brief analysis of the approaches and structures for international cooperation in police training more generally. I situate the analysis in the context of the African region, which is largely characterised by fragile democracies, weak economies, and inter- and intra-state conflicts that have helped to exacerbate local, national and cross-border crimes. Finally, based on this analysis that is informed by a knowledge and study of regional and international trends, I make broad practical recommendations for the institutionalisation of Africa-specific regional cooperation in police training.

THE RATIONALE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION: A SYNOPSIS

5. In a very general sense, the need for international police cooperation stems from the paradigm of globalisation. Even though the phenomenon of globalisation is not a new one, it is nonetheless animated by dramatic advances in technology, particularly information technology.

6. As a result, traditional policing has been complicated by fundamental political, socio-economic and technological trends including but not limited to:

- Increasing regional integration within Africa that has implied open borders for the movement of people, goods and services with greater ease and speed. As a global phenomenon, this has also been accentuated by the widespread use of modern means of cellular and satellite communications that tend to make the use of cable communication redundant
- As alluded to already, the incidence of intra-state conflicts in Africa—particularly in the Mano River Union area of West Africa, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa—have not only had regional ramifications. They have involved the proliferation of small arms and light weapons for the illegal exploitation of natural resources, and led to the destruction of states, the

displacement of large segments of populations as internally displaced persons

- Coupled with porous borders across the length and breadth of the continent, these modernisation opportunities and regional insecurity and instability have served to create greater opportunities and avenues for criminal activity, including mercenarism and *warlordism* [sic], not only nationally and regionally, but also between the continent and other regions of the world
- In more recent times international as well as regional terrorism has created another dimension for the nexus between criminal and terrorist networks, threatening individual freedoms, and national and global security.⁵ Africa has been drawn into the next world war of asymmetric warfare not as a matter of choice, but of indirect linkages with international actors and issues

7. The foregoing issues are certainly not peculiar to Africa, but are symptomatic of global trends.⁶

8. In the light of such dynamics, it is arguable that there is a commensurate need for national police services to close ranks and “combat” international crime together. This synergy is necessary to protect individual rights and freedoms, as well as the democratic and economic stability of nation states within spheres delineated as regions of common security and justice. It is also pertinent here to note that international police cooperation is but only one dimension of the fight against international crime and terrorist networks. In the democratic context, such cooperation should extend to and involve other law enforcement and rule of law pillar institutions, such as judicial, corrections, customs and immigration. To be effective, however, such cooperation needs to be institutionalised at all levels, national, regional and international.

THE CASE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLICE TRAINING

9. It has been conclusively argued already that international cooperation in police training is an important element of international police cooperation. As a result, this cooperation is also a function of international relations that is aimed at protecting fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as core values of political systems. As a result, the objective of regional and international cooperation in police

training should be to achieve such ideals as were set out by Interpol at its 18th African Regional Conference (Accra, Ghana, 15 July 2005), namely:

*"to enhance cross-border coordination — cooperation [sic] — of police work in the region and improve communication of crucial criminal information among police in Africa ... including measures (and priorities) to fight terrorism and organised crime, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking [and drug abuse], stolen motor vehicles and environmental crime."*⁷

Indeed, one may very well expand on the broad category of organised crime, emphasising cross-border crimes of the trafficking in small arms and light weapons, illicit diamonds and other precious minerals, illegal immigration, etc., as constituting the *raison d'être* for international police cooperation.

10. To use a military analogy, it needs pointing out that armies do not only have doctrines, but also train as to how they will fight future wars with the weapons and equipment on inventory—existing and projected—based on lessons learnt from history, as well as assessments of future threats. In this sense, training becomes a force multiplier and a mission enhancer. While training will not guarantee victory, it is generally held that it will help to achieve a number of desirable non-tangibles, including quality leadership, and quality personnel with sharpened skills and instincts, while ensuring common standards of drills and procedures, among others.

11. It is tempting to think that such obviously military notions are not applicable to police. Nothing could be further from the truth and reality. The most obvious point is that police cooperation in training, among others, will help to establish common standards of democratic policing that accord with and support international normative laws and conventions, create structures for the exchange of information, expose the cooperating services to the equipment of others. Given sufficient political will, these can be motivating factors and driver to achieve a degree of commonality of such equipment, in order to achieve some amount of "interoperability". All of this will be in addition to the dividend of establishing *esprit de corps* regionally and internationally among police services and forces.

12. Thus, as police pursue multilateral arrangements for combating crime, they necessarily need to undertake multilateral training approaches, focusing on "what police do and how they can do it

better” to meet the expectations of regional publics, as well as how to be prepared through training to combat evolving threats to the freedoms and rights of society, namely organised crime and terrorism, among others.

13. Curiously, a more compelling case for international cooperation in police training relates rather to a non-traditional area of policing, namely peace missions, which was “thrust” upon the United Nations System as a Cold War mechanism for maintaining and restoring global peace and security since 1948. Especially following the end of the Cold War, peacekeeping has undoubtedly gained additional significance as a multidimensional industry involving not only military, but also police and civilian components, focusing as well on missions and tasks from traditional ceasefire monitoring to more complex ones such as executive law enforcement, reform of the security and rule of law institutions, among others.

14. Within Africa, AU police—now numbering some 1338 personnel—have for the first time been deployed in the African Mission in Sudan-Darfur (AMIS) since October 2004. In all, it is estimated that as at 31 January 2006, for instance, some 2037 African police officers were part of the total deployed police strength of 7371 personnel under UN command. Together with the AMIS contribution (1338), African countries would be contributing about 3375 experts to peace missions globally. The contributions by 25 African police contributing countries⁸ amount to 27% of the deployed UN police manpower. In comparison with the developed world, sometimes with even lower ratios but lower levels of crime and better policing infrastructure, these African police contributions constitute a huge bill in view of the relatively poor police civilian ratios within the continent, coupled with serious levels of serious and organised crimes.

15. In the first instance, the compounding effect of small African police services and mismatched internal and external commitments call for training to improve effectiveness and efficiency. In the second instance, however, this reality underscores the argument that peacekeeping, even if a secondary function of the security services, is a vital function of international relations and politics. More so in Africa, it has gained an added significance as a result of the AU’s renaissance security architecture, namely the multidimensional African Standby Force (ASF) project, comprising national civilian, military and police components in their countries of origin. The vital importance of peacekeeping within the region therefore also implies an equally vital

importance of peacekeeping training, which has been increasingly institutionalised within the continent through the establishment of centres of excellence, largely with external funding.⁹ Incidentally, because such centres have focused and catered largely to the military, there is need for dedicated regional police centres of peacekeeping excellence, to redress the imbalance in police capacity and preparedness for peacekeeping missions and deployments.

16. Under these circumstances, effective peacekeeping training and education will help to produce well trained personnel with sharpened functional and professional skills, and enhanced skills and judgment. It will also help to create awareness about critical issues of human rights and international humanitarian law, which are key in peacekeeping owing to the incidence of impunity and complex emergencies in recent years—Liberia, Sierra Leone, DRC and now Sudan (Darfur) are some of the classic examples. Well trained, well managed and well led police personnel will display high morale and professional competence in the skills required for peacekeeping mission accomplishment, but this is also generally true of all training.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLICE TRAINING: WHAT FOCUS AND INFRASTRUCTURE?

17. Before dealing with external initiatives and assistance towards the enhancement of national and regional capacities within the framework of international cooperation in police training, it is worth acknowledging existing training modules under the management of the Training Sub-Committee of SARPCCO. The short list includes:

- Motor vehicle theft investigation
- Crime intelligence
- Commercial crime
- Cyber (computer) crimes
- Terrorism
- Stock theft
- Firearms identification and safe handling

18. The focus of regional cooperation in police training should go beyond the scope of the modular operational training issues. It should, for instance, also include a component of best practices on regional cooperation itself, as well as best practices in national approaches in

community policing. After all regional security is the sum total of national safety and security.

19. Furthermore, it should also provide for police leadership and management at the senior and middle levels through sharing best practices and making use of the transfer of relevant industrial and business management models and practices. Frost emphasises this more cogently when he advised that "*goal setting, business planning, the management of change, total quality management and performance measurement*" should not only be familiar terms nationally, but also serve as the focus of mutual valuable learning.¹⁰ This event is a good example of such leadership and management training through simple, but effective platforms, such as symposia and seminars, even though it could also be enhanced through the institutionalisation of a Regional Senior Police Command and Staff College (RSPCSC).

20. The reality, however, is that the existing infrastructure for such regional cooperation in police training—and operations—has been borne by regional lead nations serving as the locomotives for socio-economic stability. This is a traditional role that South Africa has been playing long before the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS), Jackie Selebi, was appointed the first African to serve as Interpol's President from 2004-08, by hosting, funding and providing the bulk of communications for regional police operations. On the other hand, however, Kapinga has pointed out that "there is no doubt that [locomotive countries like] South Africa [as is also possibly the case with Nigeria and Kenya, which geographically shares borders with countries emerging from violent armed conflicts], records the highest statistics in the region in all the categories listed above."¹¹

21. Thus, other sources of external support and assistance in international cooperation for police training help to ease the burden of regional collaboration on regional lead nations. In addition to widening the scope for sharing best practices, such assistance and support is optimised if geared towards the establishment of a regional centre of police excellence. This also helps to "arrest" the migration of training courses among regional countries, some of whom lack sufficient and suitable facilities, but still offer to host courses on account of national pride and regional ownership. A police centre of excellence, on the other hand, will help to centralise scarce resources in facilities that are best suited for effective training of trainers rather than the rank and file.

22. The establishment of a regional police centre of excellence therefore appears to be an idea whose time has come for the police. This is especially the case, in order to meet the demand for police experts and formed police units in peacekeeping missions mandated by the AU, within the framework of the ASF. If and when established, such a centre will also help to bring the police at par with their military counterpart that have a lead in the area of military observer and peacekeeping force operations.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLICE TRAINING: WHAT ROLE FOR THE EXTERNAL PARTNERS?

23. Generally within Africa, the requirements of centres of excellence in physical and other infrastructure¹² have been met through both bilateral (French, UK, USA, German) and multilateral (G8 and EU) initiatives,¹³ that find it easier to extend non-lethal rather than lethal assistance that involve more rigorous benchmarks. However, there have been some tensions in the ownership of such centres as a result of the asymmetric nature of the relationships between partners and regional beneficiaries.

24. Besides the purely peacekeeping centres of excellence already cited, the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Botswana is perhaps the best known police facility within Africa. But it may also be typical of some of the political demerits of such centres, including the prerogatives of external partners in determining what courses are run and which countries are eligible to participate. The case of the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre is an example of such practical difficulties around ownership.

25. Perhaps, rather than being left as an exercise of policy engagement between external partners and regions, Interpol could explore the possibility of establishing such regional centres of police excellence in a similar fashion to the I-24/7¹⁴ communication policy. Given its objective of gaining greater collaboration and capacity among national police globally, Interpol could consider itself as a key stakeholder in efforts to operationalise a regional police centre of excellence.

26. As a political compromise, it is also possible to divide existing course modules among a selected number of national colleges which can then serve as regional centres of learning on specific courses and modules. This has the benefit of deepening the sense of regional

ownership of regional collaboration in police training. It may, however, not be an option that external partners may find too favourable to buy into and support.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN POLICE TRAINING: WHAT ROLE FOR POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTES?

27. It is ironic that someone from a civil society organisation is passionate about the establishment of a centre of excellence that may threaten his core business of providing capacity-building training courses that migrate from one SARPCCO country to the other. The courses in question that are provided by the Training for Peace Programme at the Institute for Security Studies, for instance, are the UN Police Officers (Peacekeeping) Trainers Course, and the peace-building courses relating to violence against women and children, and HIV/AIDS. Be that as it may, international cooperation in police training also involves collaboration with policy research institutions and university faculties, as much as other agencies of states. Even though police training facilities may include organic departments and desks for research and development, the efforts of such departments and desks may not necessarily suffice for police training to keep abreast of modern trends in crime and other discourses.

28. But even if such capacity will be organic to police training facilities, police training and learning objectives will be better enhanced through collaboration with other governmental, non-governmental and international organisations, including civil society organisations that focus on broad policy research issues relating to human security. Such institutions will be able to enrich learning through expert regional knowledge of issues and expert facilitation, as well as feeding the outputs and results of research and publications into police training. Non-police research on such issues as small arms proliferation; crime and justice trends; money laundering; terrorism; conflict trends; regional, continental and UN peace operations, including the role of the international community; protection of human rights; and the discourse around the protection of civilians; are some of such issues that the police may find collaboration with other organisations and agencies beneficial.

CONCLUSION: MEETING THE CHALLENGE

29. The need for international cooperation in police training has gained paramountcy in tandem with an increasing need for international police cooperation in international relations. This paradigm shift arises from political, socio-economic and technological changes. While these trends have augured well for the movement of goods, services and people, they have also been of help to international criminal and terrorist networks. In Africa, this paradigm has also been exacerbated by the incidence of violent armed conflicts and the resultant complex emergencies involving the massive displacement of populations. The regional and international dimension of crime and peacekeeping therefore underscore the need for multilateral arrangements for policing society and for regional keeping.

30. While regional police organisations have institutionalised regional cooperation in policing and training, their efforts stand to gain from further assistance and support from the international community, as well as non-police policy research institutions and academic faculties. The challenge therefore is how to achieve practicable coordination and cooperation in the establishment of regional centres of excellence in accordance with the demands of policing and regional security policies. The efforts to realistically meet this demand may have a lot to learn from military infrastructure for in- and out-service professional development, for operational defence and security roles. Thus, in this direction, it should be possible for existing police colleges to form regional associations which, if properly managed and resourced, could serve as a useful and effective platform and/or vehicle for deepening international cooperation in police training, as well as standardising training and education at levels higher than national.

A SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

31. To meet the challenges of international cooperation in police training, the following suggested approaches may help and are worth considering:

- Establishment of a regional police centre of excellence. Though argued to be supported by partners, with Interpol in the lead, such facilities should be staffed by regional officers to help build local capacity and facilitate regional rollout of training course modules
- This recommendation notwithstanding, regions could consider the institutionalisation of specific training course modules in

selected national institutions that will then serve as regional facilities. If supported regionally as they should, such national facilities will be able to become centres of excellence in the specific disciplines of choice

- Establishment and institutionalisation of an Association of regional police training colleges to support the functions of the Training Sub-Committee, in terms of the coordination of training courses, including exchanging resource persons, research data and teaching materials
 - Institutionalisation of periodic regional seminars at appropriate functional levels of police hierarchy, including the leadership and management level, for instance, to discuss trends and share best practices in cross-border crime and peacekeeping
 - Invitation of external resource persons from non-police policy research institutions and organisations, and university faculties
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Endnotes

¹ Paper presented at the 16th Interpol Symposium for Heads of Training, Caesars Palace Hotel, Johannesburg, 5-7 March 2007.

² Deflem, Mathieu 2002. Policing World Society, Foundations of International Police Cooperation. Clarendon Studies in Criminology, Oxford, 2002. Reviewed by Sajo, Andreas 2003, Legal Studies, Central European University, Budapest, Vol. 13. No 8 [online], August 2003. Available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/lpbr/subpages/reviews/Deflem03.htm>.

³ Kapinga, Kenny 2005. *International Cooperation and Criminal Justice*, Criminal Justice Conference, [online], 7-8 February 2005. Available from <http://www.csvr.org.za/confpaps/kapinga.htm> [accessed 14 February 2007]. Kenny Kapinga (Botswana) was Head of the Interpol Sub-Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe, from 2003 to 2005.

⁴ See Article 3 of the SARPCCO Constitution (1995).

⁵ Wycoff, Karl 2004. *Fighting terrorism in Africa*, US Department of State, the House International Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Washington [online], 1 April 2004. Available from <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/31077.htm> [accessed 14 February 2007]. In his testimony before the House Wycoff, Associate Coordinator, Office of the Coordination for Counterterrorism, pointed out that while 9/11 served as a watershed in the threat from terrorism, other attacks in Kenya and Tanzania (1998) and Mombassa (2002) served to vindicate US concerns of active terror cells within the continent. An extension of this argument would be that the establishment of the Islamist Courts Union (ICU) in Somalia (2006) is further evidence of US views of Africa serving as a hub for international terrorism,

⁶ See for instance, Europa, European Commission, Freedom, Security and Justice, *EU level cooperation crucial for national police force* [online]. (nd). Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/police/wai/fsj_police_intro_en.htm [accessed 14 February 2007]. See also Frost, TB 1996. *The Case for International Police Cooperation on Training Issues in Policing in Central and Eastern Europe: Comparing firsthand knowledge with experience from the West*, College of Police and Security Studies, Slovenia, 1996 [online]. (nd), Available at <http://www.ncirs.gov/policing/cas575.htm> [accessed 14 February 2007].

⁷ Interpol, Interpol Media Release, *Interpol African Regional Conference Adopts Cooperation Measures* [online], 15 July 2005. Available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/PressReleases/PR2005/PR200530.asp> [accessed 14 February 2007].

⁸ Some of the significant contributions of over 100 were by: Burkina Faso (174), Niger (107), Nigeria (390) and Senegal (464).

⁹ Examples of such centres of peacekeeping excellence are: the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (Accra, Ghana), the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (Harare, Zimbabwe), the Mali Peacekeeping School (Koulikoro, Mali), the Peace Support Training Centre (Nairobi, Kenya), among others.

¹⁰ Frost, *The Case for International Police Cooperation on Training Issues*, op cit.

¹¹ Kapinga, 2005. *International Cooperation and Criminal Justice*, Criminal Justice Conference, [online], op cit. My own view is that Kenya's proximity to countries emerging from conflicts makes it easier for small arms proliferation into the country, among other factors, such as being a hub of regional travel.

¹² Some of these requirements are: stores and furnishings; library facility, information and communication technology, and 24/7 internet access for online research and networking; production facilities; and audio-visual equipment; as well as transport, other consumables and funding for rolling out course modules.

¹³ Other external capacity-building initiatives include France's *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix* (RECAMP), the UK's British Peace Support Training (BPST), and the USA's now Africa Contingency Training Assistance (ACOTA) and Operation Focus Relief (OFR), in addition to the EU's Africa Peace Facility and the G8's Africa Action Plan and the Global Peace Operations Initiative.

¹⁴ Interpol's global police communications system linking all its 186 member states.