

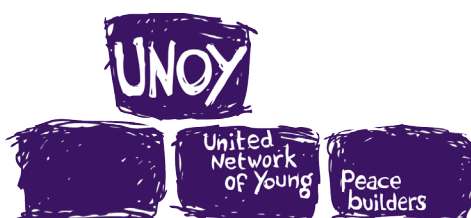
YOUTH LEADERSHIP OF UNSCR 2250

Youth Peacebuilders and the Security Sector Reform Process



Case study by
Emmanuel Singa

Published
January 2021



About the Author

Emmanuel Singa

National Coordinator of SOS CIVISME Centrafrique, Country Director of Global Peace Chain CAR, Member of the African Union's Youth Advocacy Group, Member of African Union's Pool of Expert on Peace and Security.

Emmanuel Singa works on community engagement and social mobilization that enables the community to take local initiatives for development while building on available local resources. He also works to engage youth in capacity building at the community level. Emmanuel has experience on intergenerational exchanges as well as community dialogue in order to recreate community cohesion and broken bonds resulting from conflicts. He also accompanies youth and civil society organizations in the implementation of their projects at the community level.

Promoter of Resolution 2250 adopted by the UN Security Council in 2015, Emmanuel SINGA conducts specific research on various issues related to Security Sector Reform, Gender, and the fight against small arms and light weapons.



Acknowledgments

- Alessia Ulfe Bandini (UNOY)
- Mori Plaschinski (UNOY)
- Erly MUNOZ
- Amelie NAMUROY
- Igor ACKO
- Mme Ines Valerie OUABY BEKAY
- Desirée MALINBANGAR
- Jean Pierre BETINDJI
- Octavie Mirabelle TABANGUET
- United Network of Young Peacebuilders
- Team SOS CIVISME Centrafrique
- Team Global Peace Chain CAR

Table of Contents

Acronyms	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Youth and Security Sector Reforms related to UNSCR 2250	6
3. Youth and the fight against Small Arms and Light Weapons	6-7
4. AU Youth4Peace in relation to the Silencing the Guns by 2020 Roadmap	8-9
5. Challenges	10
6. Conclusion	11
7. References	12

Acronyms

SALW : Small Arms and Light Weapons

ECCAS : Economic Community of Central African States

RECs : Regional Economic Communities

PSC : Peace and Security Council of the African Union

AYC : African Youth Charter

ECOWAS : Economic Community of West African States

DDRR : Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration and Repatriation

ECOSOCC : Economic, Social and Cultural Council (of the African Union)

CSO : Civil Society Organization

CAAF : Central African Armed Forces

CAR : Central African Republic

SSR : Security Sector Reform

AU : African Union

UNOY : United Network of Young Peacebuilders

MINUSCA : United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

RM : Regional Mechanism

IGAD : Intergovernmental Agency

Youth4Peace : Peace & Security Youth Program

Introduction

The world population is represented by more than 60% of young people, 70%¹ of whom are on the African continent. Unfortunately, many young people face various challenges, such as lack of professional opportunities, unemployment, limited access to adequate education.... All these circumstances make young people vulnerable economically, politically and socially. These challenges hinder social cohesion and the ability of young people to become involved in peacebuilding, as their capacity to act is therefore limited.

Societies will not enjoy peace and security without economic development, and at the same time, there will be no economic development without peace and security. For this reason, young people must be at the center of any action related to building peace and security at the community level.

In December 2015², the United Nations Security Council adopted the Resolution 2250, the first resolution with a focus on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution, along with other similar initiatives such as the Amman Youth Declaration, UN Security Council Resolution 2535, the UN Youth Peace and Security Agenda, and the AU Policy Framework on Youth, Peace and Security, have played a crucial role in legitimizing the efforts of young peacemakers around the world. These resolutions are changing the discourse on violence and extremist violence, in national and international contexts, instead of portraying young people as potential perpetrators of violence. It emphasizes that most young people are not involved in either armed conflict or violence. The perception of young people as perpetrators of violence is a dangerous misconception of young people's role in both violence prevention and conflict transformation.

CAR presents particular challenges and opportunities in relation to youth participation in peace building. These major challenges are much more focused on involvement in Security Sector Reform processes as well as the fight against small arms and light weapons at the national level.

Referring to the African Union's Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform³, and the African Union's Agenda 2063 through its ECOSOCC body, civil society is becoming increasingly involved in promoting dialogue on security issues. Especially when it comes to Security Sector Reform and the fight against small arms and light weapons, as it varies in each country and includes the individuals, groups and institutions responsible for providing, managing and controlling the security of people and the State. The CAR National Strategy on the Fight against SALW stipulates that SALW proliferation poses a persistent problem to peace and the restoration of security because the hijackings and thefts from poorly secured stockpiles have allowed insurgents, armed groups, and organized gangs to significantly increase violence. Inadequate means of controlling these weapons and ammunition have a negative impact on peace.

Youth organizations can play an important role in promoting national and international tools on Security Sector Reform and become more involved in the fight against SALW. In addition, young people can contribute to citizen watchdogs in parliamentary committees, relevant ministries and security bodies and institutions, noting that youth organizations and young leaders are a key component of civil society and the state.

1 <https://WWW.UNESCO.ORG//STATISTICS>

ECOSOCC: The African Union's organ of interaction with civil society organizations.

2 United Nations Resolution 2250, (December 2015)

3 Policy Framework of the African Union adopted by the summit of African Heads of State in 2013 in Addis Ababa.

Youth and Security Sector Reforms related to UNSCR 2250

Youth in our communities in Africa can play an important role in Security Sector Reform and Governance in line with AU policy frameworks, the UN Youth Peace and Security Agenda, and national security policies and strategies. A combination of political constraints and limited knowledge and skills has tended to limit the role and impact of young people in these areas, particularly in conflict settings.

Nevertheless, young peacebuilding leaders can play a major role in community dialogue processes with the armed forces, police, and other security services at the community level to rebuild the climate of trust that has been shattered by armed and political conflict.

Similarly, youth organizations holding experiences in the field of peacebuilding can participate more meaningfully in the formulation and implementation of security sector reform policies and programs at the regional and national levels, to further support people-centered security governance.

The National Strategy on SSR is built on the concepts of State Security and Human Security, and the role of civil society is evoked in accordance with the principles of democratic control of the security sector.

In the CAR, some young peace builders are promoting and building community ownership of the five-year (2017-2021) National Strategy on SSR. In the midst of awareness-raising campaigns within each respective organizations, the main objective is to inform citizens about the existence of these documents and to promote a better basic understanding. SSR embraces a holistic concept, the institutional attributes, roles and missions of particular components of the security sector (armed forces, police, intelligence services, etc.) have led to political and power challenges. These dynamics need to be understood in any analysis of the reform process, as well as how these processes operate in the Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone security structures.

We are increasingly noticing in our states that it is important to consider youth, women, and civil society as a whole in the development and planning of security policies and laws.

Youth and the fight against Small Arms and Light Weapons

Multiple potential entry points for youth peacebuilders and youth organizations in the fight against weapons at the local level exist. Entry points need to be carefully tailored, they are often best when they reflect existing areas of expertise, and in this sense, young people and youth organizations should exploit the diversity of skills and expertise within their own ranks.

Youth advocacy on the proliferation and misuse of firearms, which can cause violence and armed conflict in our communities, should be integrated or aligned with existing work under the prevention pillar of Resolution 2250, which clearly outlines the contribution of youth in promoting and preventing conflict at the local level.

« Weapons have caused us a lot of violence and caused massive displacement, we are forced to go to Cameroon to live, we don't want that anymore» -A young leader Bouar CAR⁴

« As long as there is no security we cannot lay down our weapons, it is thanks to our weapons that we protect ourselves» - A young fighter from the Anti Balaka group ⁵

⁴ Interview conducted by : Emmanuel SINGA to Cherdon (Young leader of Bouar), date : November 21, 2020
⁵ Interview conducted by : Emmanuel SINGA to a Youth from the Anti Balaka group (Anonymous).

Youth organizations can contribute effectively in raising awareness on the dangers of firearms in our different communities⁶. Youth organizations that have the necessary knowledge and tools can conduct research on, for example, the rate of gun violence at the national, regional and continental levels.

In addition, progress in mainstreaming gender equality (parity) at all levels of programming and intervention on youth, peace and security is essential. This aims to eliminate hidden and open structural inequalities, and to ensure that interventions respond to needs. Young women can contribute effectively in community sensitization and education, actively preparing the ground for peace and civil disarmament. They are an inseparable component in the control of illicit weapons. Their actions can improve conflict management in our respective communities.

In October 2020, through the “Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa” and the “International Action on Small Arms” (IANSA), two Central African civil society organizations including the Women’s Network for Protection and Social Action and Global Peace Chain Central Africa engaged the authorities in charge of the national commission as well as some members of the police and gendarmerie for the fight against SALW into an online campaign to demonstrate their commitment through messages and short videos. The main groups that led this initiative were the local members of IANSA : “Women and Disarmament. Stop violence against Women and Youth through weapons. Young Women and the Fight Against Weapons is Possible”⁷. The objective of the campaign was to launch a message for the effective integration and consideration of the gender dimension in the fight against SALW at the local and national levels.

« Women of the Central African Republic, let us say no to weapons for an adequate education of our children and youth! (Message launched by the Women Leaders and Young Women at the Closing of the 16 Days of Activism 2020) »⁸

It is important to note that **young peacebuilders can play a key role** in promoting and appropriating policy tools **to combat** the abusive proliferation of **weapons in our communities**, in order to minimize the flow of weapons in localities.

6 Interview conducted by : Emmanuel SINGA to Octavie Mirabelle TABANGUET (Young Women leader), date: December 02, 2020

7 Ibid.

8 Interview conducted by: Emmanuel SINGA to Adja Kadjidja SYBA (Women leader), Date: November 27, 2020.

AU Youth4Peace in relation to the Silencing the Guns by 2020 Roadmap

The persistence of various challenges in various parts of Africa such as insecurity, instability, disruption of political harmony, disruption of social cohesion, call on the Peace and Security Council to play an essential role in carrying out strategic interventions in order to put an end to this tragic situation. According to the African Union, most crises and violent conflicts in Africa are driven by poverty, economic deprivation, violation or manipulation of constitutions, violation of human rights, exclusion, inequality, marginalization, and mismanagement of Africa's rich ethnic diversity⁹. These conflicts have triggered a cycle of violence in some post-conflict contexts and external intervention in African affairs.

It is in this context that the Peace and Security Council (PSC) organized, from November 7 to 9 2016, in Lusaka, Zambia, a Retreat on the theme: "Practical Steps to Silencing the guns in Africa by 2020". The Retreat brought together PSC Member States, representatives of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)¹⁰, the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities and/or Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Committee on Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA).

« This was all the more urgent given the key objectives of Agenda 2063 and the AU's overall vision of building a peaceful, stable, secure, integrated and prosperous Africa and the substance of Agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals. »¹¹

« Address the root causes of conflict, including economic and social disparities; end impunity by strengthening national and continental judicial institutions and ensure accountability, consistent with our collective responsibility to the principle of non-indifference (African Union Lusaka Retreat) »

The "Silencing the guns" program is a determination of all our states to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and to make peace a reality for all African peoples.

Today, we see some progress in relation to the roadmap "Silencing the guns in Africa by 2020". First, the African Union has decided to establish Amnesty Month, which will be celebrated during the month of September each year. This initiative invites citizens to voluntarily lay down their weapons with the objective of significantly reducing the number of weapons in various communities.

In this same perspective, in 2018, the African Union has established through the Department of Peace and Security a specific program¹² for youth called "Youth for Peace". The main objective is to promote youth participation in peace and security activities at the continental level while building on Resolution 2250, the Youth Peace and Security Agenda. The continental framework of this program has enabled the recruitment of Five (5) Youth Ambassadors in 2019 who will communicate on youth-led initiatives in each region. In the CAR, an activity was organized online for the action plan validation of Central African region's young ambassadors of peace. The major outcome is the adoption of the regional action plan.

9 African Union Practical Roadmap to Silencing Weapons: www.au.org (African Union)
 10 Report of the African Union Peace and Security Council Retreat (LUSAKA 2016)
 11 Conclusion of the Lusaka Retreat
 12 African Union Youth for Peace Program (Youth4peace African Union)

Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063, the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next five decades, emphasizes the need for dialogue-based conflict prevention, management and resolution of ongoing conflicts in order to silence the continent's weapons by 2020¹³. Agenda 2063 states that in order to achieve conflict prevention and resolution, a culture of peace and tolerance must be cultivated and inculcated in children and youth, among others, through peace education. Furthermore, in its first ten-year Implementation Plan, Agenda 2063 emphasizes the imperative to end all wars, civil conflict, gender-based violence and violent conflict as Africa's counterpart in a collective effort to silence the guns by 2020.

« To reduce young people's attraction to negative survival strategies, including radicalism, it is essential that they are engaged in entrepreneurship and employment on the one hand and that they learn to get involved in the life of the city on the other hand (Youth Ambassadors for the AU Youth for Peace Program Central Africa Tchad). »

Several consultations were organized in 2019 in the countries of the subregion to gather young people's views on the peace and security process at the level of each country and this led to a regional youth meeting that enabled the development of a work plan covering the period 2020-2022 taking into account the Five (5) Pillars of Resolution 2250¹⁴.

In the same initiative launched in 2019, the Central African Global Peace Chain in partnership with SOS Civisme Centrafrique¹⁵ organized a youth awareness campaign on Resolution 2250. The main objective is to train young people located in Haut Mbomou, a region in eastern CAR, on the existence of Resolution 2250. It focuses on how they need to integrate the Resolution 2250's promotion at all levels of their activities. This opens the door for youth participation in the peace and security process. In addition, this training also developed ideas on how young people can live a peaceful life in their communities. The training allowed us to gather messages on peace and social cohesion from leaders of youth organizations and young artists.

In the CAR, challenges related to the implementation of Resolution 2250 and the Youth, Peace and Security agenda remain a priority matter for young peacebuilders at the national level. Despite our efforts through advocacy and awareness campaigns, we have a lot of work to do in order to integrate the resolutions into our national legislations.

13 African Union Practical Road Map to Silencing Weapons (African Union)

14 Action Plan of the Central African Youth Ambassadors for Peace within the framework of the African Union Youth for Peace Program

15 Report on the activities of SOS CIVISME Centrafrique 2019

Challenges

Ownership of Resolution 2250 and the youth peace and security agenda remains one of the major challenges for youth peace builders and other peace activists globally. There is a willingness at the continental and international level to concretely involve young people in the peace and security process, but the involvement of young people in peace and security processes at the national level remains a challenge. Often it is difficult for resolutions and policies adopted at the international level to be passed into law and incorporated into legislation at national level.

« To strengthen the active participation of young people in the peace and security process at the national level, our authorities and the nation's elected officials must pass laws and insert in our national legislation to further strengthen the participation of young people at the national level (Young leaders of the 8th District of Bangui) »¹⁵

Youth groups have limited visibility and are poorly integrated and represented in formal peace-building processes. This includes youth groups' limited participation in peace talks, peace support operations, election observation missions, humanitarian relief operations, post-conflict reconstruction programs, and youth-led spaces and initiatives in other official peace and security programs implemented at the national level. This reflects the underlying issues of trust and the continued focus on the problematic role of youth in violence.

On the other hand, collecting information from the authorities or institutions in charge also remains a major challenge for young peace builders.

We found that one of the appropriate responses to multiple crises is the active involvement of civil society organizations, especially young people in mediation processes. Offering youth the opportunity to be integrated into the appropriate bodies for the management and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

« All relevant actors to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth in conflict prevention and resolution, including when negotiating or implementing peace agreements, in order to involve young people and take into account their views as appropriate, bearing in mind that the marginalization of youth is detrimental to the establishment of sustainable peace and the fight against violent extremism as a precursor to terrorism (Resolutions 2250 and 2419) »¹⁶

16 Interview conducted by : EMMANUEL Singa to the young leaders of the 8th District of the city of Bangui
17 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 and 2419 (2015)

Conclusion

Given that SSR aims to improve both state and human security, this means recognizing that each person has different security needs that are linked to their identity.

It is important that the Security Sector Reform process takes into account these differences and involves young people to take action and further integrate specific issues related to peace and security taking into account the Security Sector Reform and the fight against SALW in order to foster Sustainable Peace in our communities.

In the CAR, there have been several achievements in terms of youth involvement in peace and security processes especially when it is identified that in order to advance peace and security agenda and Resolution 2250, the focus must be on actions at the local level. The fight against SALW has become an essential point to advance on the road to peace and social well-being in the CAR. In this sense, various initiatives have been carried out by young peace builders, such as awareness-raising campaigns, online campaigns led by the Women's Network for Protection and Social Action and the Central African Global Peace Chain as well as the Youth Ambassadors for Peace program led by the African Union. Similarly, there are various challenges existing to develop the peace and security agenda in the CAR and to fight against small arms, mainly the difficulty in collecting information from authorities or institutions in charge, the underlying problems of trust towards young people and the continued focus on the problematic role of youth in the violence.

Finally, youth organizations and youth-led civil society organizations can serve as bridge within the community since the inclusion of youth has become both a demographic and democratic imperative. The international community, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, IGAD, ECCAS,) recognize today that sustainable peace cannot be built without protecting the life and dignity of youth.

References

Graeme SIMPSON: The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security (2018)
www.youth4peace.info/progressstudy

African Union: Peace and Security Department (2013)
www.au.int.org/Cadre-d'orientation-rss

African Union: Peace and Security Department
www.auint.org/cadre-continentale-de-la-jeunesse-paix-et-securite

Fairlie CHAPPUIS: Governance of the Security Sector(2015)
www.dcaf.ch

Youth, Peace and Security Agenda
www.un.org

National Strategy on Security Sector Reform (2017)

National Strategy on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (2019)