

Assessing the African Union's Strategies for Child Safety in Times of Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the African Union's strategies for safeguarding children in African armed conflicts. The study used a multiple case study design, analyzing secondary data from the AU, UN, and scholarly articles through content analysis. This method helps us to understand the grave violations committed against children and shows the African Union's strategies for child protection. The findings identify the gaps in child protection monitoring despite strong legal structures. The study found that children are the most vulnerable civilians affected by conflicts. The finding shows an impressive role of the African Union in child protection in times of conflict. The findings show that AU's effort has been hampered by consequential challenges. The study concludes that, although the AU has put in place comprehensive legal frameworks, their effectiveness is limited by insufficient monitoring. Hence, enhancing its reporting mechanisms is necessary for the AU to ensure the improved safety of children in conflict areas.

Keywords: Conflict, African Union, Child Rights and Protection.

INTRODUCTION

This research investigates how the African Union safeguards children in times of armed conflicts, with emphasis on its legal structures, monitoring mechanism, and recent actions in conflict regions like the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. African states since independence have been crippled by conflicts and civil strife in which violence and incessant killing have become prevalent¹. Throughout history, war and armed conflicts have affected the lives of people in so many ways. The continent is beset by genocide, crimes against humanity, killings, torture, and other civil and political violations². Children are the most vulnerable civilian population affected by all these conflicts. The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund reports that 1 in 10 children is globally affected by armed conflicts³. Thousands of children are being killed, maimed, displaced, abducted, sexually violated, and recruited as armed forces to forced child marriages⁴. However, all of these scenarios, come with the possible risk of abuse and exploitation. The conscription and recruitment of children into the armed forces constitute the most egregious human rights violation against children. This practice exposes them to child labor, abduction, and slavery, making it a major global concern⁵. Recent reports estimate that over 3000 child soldiers are held by armed forces in the Democratic Republic of

¹ Johnson, A.O. (2010). Conflict In Africa: Meaning, Causes, Impact and Solution. Vol 4(4). An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal. P. 549. Doi:10.4314/afrev.v4i4.69251.

² Sarkim, J. (2009). The Role of the United Nations, the African Union and Africa's Sub-Regional Organizations in Dealing with Africa's Human Rights Problems: Connecting Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect. Journal of African law. Vol 53(1). Doi:10.1017/S0021855309000011.

³ Kadir, A., Shenoda, S., Goldhagen J, Et Al (2018). The Effect of Armed Conflicts on Children. Pediatrics. Vol.142 (6). P.1. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1542/Peds.2018-2586>.

⁴ Tirumah, M. (2014). Safeguarding The Future. Does The African Union Have the Capacity to Protect Children in Armed Conflicts? Master Thesis University of Tampere. Doi: 10.1,3140/R.G.2.1,333.8729.

⁵ McKnight J. (2010). Child Soldier in Africa. A Global Approach to Human Rights Protection, Enforcement, and Post Conflict Reintegration. African Journal of International & Comparative Law. Vol 18(2) P. 113. DOI:10.3366/E095488901000563.

the Congo⁶, while the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is estimated to have recruited between 2,500 and 5000 children in the ongoing conflict⁷. These are just a few examples highlighting the grim reality. Child soldiering in Africa remains a major threat to human rights. It is vital to comprehend the effectiveness of the AU's child protection measures to create stronger policies and interventions to protect children's rights during conflicts in Africa. The African Union which is the key institute responsible for peace and security in the continent, has condemned the killing, maiming abducting, and recruiting of children in armed forces. The organ has come up with several child protection mechanisms to ensure child rights are protected. The AUs have formed engagement with high-level actors engaged in child protection including the United Nations, the AU government, Civil Society & private sectors. To address the problem of child rights violations, the African Union has come up with several child protection initiatives and policies such as the African Charter of Rights and Welfare of a Child (ACRWC), The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), and the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts. These are some of the compressive political, economic, civil, and cultural rights that focus on children's rights in the continent.⁸ The organization has adopted an interventionist policy where grave violations of human rights and crimes against humanity may warrant military intervention⁹. Some examples are, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON), the AU Hybrid Mission in Darfur, the African-led International Support Mission in Central Africa (MISCA), and the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). However, despite AU's efforts to protect children in conflict situations, identifying perpetrators of child rights violations and holding them accountable for their acts to prevent further violation can sometimes prove impossible¹⁰. This study aims to assess the AU's impact on child protection in armed conflicts, evaluate its monitoring mechanisms, and identify obstacles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews relevant Literature for this study. The section provides detailed definitions and explanations of the concepts associated with this article. The study also provides detailed empirical literature on the situation of children in various conflict-prone countries in Africa. It outlines the key assumptions and intellectual reasons for what constitutes the practice of Children's Rights Protection in Africa. The section also outlines the convergence and differences in opinion among key scholars on the situation of children's rights in conflict areas in Africa synthesizes key arguments and situates their relevance to the understanding of this study.

The Concept of Conflicts

The concept of conflict and its dynamic is constantly evolving particularly in the post-Cold War era. Williams¹¹ contend that, the end of the Cold War (CW) forty years ago has not been the end of conflicts in many developing countries. However, Africa has earned a reputation of being the world's bloodiest continent, with different kinds of wars ripping the continent apart. However, William maintains that it is because of a combination of factors such as social and economic inequalities and ethnic resources (sovereignty). The author made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate Africa's armed conflict and found that the

⁶UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (11 November 2008), DRC: Recruitment of child soldiers rising. Available at <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=81406>.

⁷Child Soldiers Global Report. (2004). Africa Regional Overview, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. p. 1. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/child-soldiers-global-report-2004> .

⁸ African Charter on The Rights and Welfare of the Child, Adopted On 27 June 1981 (Entered into Force on October 21, 1986). <https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36804-treaty-african-charter-on-rights-welfare-of-the-child.pdf> .

⁹ Article 4 of the Africa Union Constitutive Act.

¹⁰ Ben, M. (1999). Protection in Practice: The Protection of Children's Rights in Situation of Armed Conflicts UNICEF Experience in Burundi. P.45. <https://catalogue.sipri.org/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=22204>.

¹¹ Williams, P.D. (2014). War & Conflict in Africa. *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 42(2). pp. 200-204. Doi: 10.5787/42-2-1102.

African Union has made much effort to protect children and has adopted strategies and institutions such as the peace and security architecture (APSA) designed to address matters of security within the continent. Eberечи¹² maintain that the last two decades have been marked as a period of a series of conflicts and challenges not only in Africa but to the international community. He further asserts that Africa is the most ridden region of the world affected by conflicts. From the democratic republic of Congo (DRC) to Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone armed conflicts have become a common denominator of statehood. Elbadawi and Sambanis explain that wars in Africa are essentially due to high levels of poverty, failed political institutions, and economic dependence on natural resources¹³. Other scholar in commenting on conflicts argues that conflicts are not just about power and resources but are rooted in the denial of human needs such as identity, security, respect, and recognition.

The Concept of Child protection

Literature has also been published that focuses particularly on the protection of children in times of conflict in Africa while some discuss the issue as part of a general discourse on children's rights. According to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, a child is every human being below the age of 18 years.¹⁴ Murray in his book entitled *Human Rights in Africa: examined the role of the Organization of African Union (OAU) and its successor the AU in dealing with human rights issues on the continent including children's rights*¹⁵. His study provided insights into the decision-making processes in the AU about human rights. Marisa & Amanda explained that the protection of children confronting adversity has become one of the central priorities of humanitarian intervention worldwide. Their study focuses on child rights and protection mechanisms established by international, regional, and national bodies. Lachman maintains that child protection in Africa is overshadowed by political and economic problems, lack of resources, the enormity of the phenomenon, and lack of a research culture and research experience¹⁶. Ensor & Reinke Maintain that the protection of children growing up amid political violence and displacement should be the central priority of humanitarian intervention not only in Africa but worldwide¹⁷. Krueger, Thompson & Crispin assess the child protection system of five West African countries and explain that the primary obstacle to the effective function of these systems is the lack of congruence between formal strategies, actual state capacities, resources, and community values and priorities¹⁸.

Empirical Literature of the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child

The adoption, in 1989, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention) by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), signaled the beginning of an era of concrete efforts by nations of the modern world to give legal recognition and protection to the rights of children, although the subject had been on the international agenda since shortly after the First World War. Following closely after the Convention was the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the Charter). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is a more specialized human rights instrument protecting the rights of children in Africa. The ACRWC was adopted in 1990 and came into force on November 29, 1999. The charter has been ratified by 47 member states while Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somalia, South Sudan, and Tunisia are yet to ratify the contract. The charter was adopted by the African Union to address the coming perceived in the UN Convention on the rights of the child, as the Convention does not fully reflect the specific

¹² Eberечи, I. (2009) *Armed Conflicts in Africa and Western Complicity: A Disincentive For African Union's Cooperation With The ICC*. African Journal of Legal Studies.53-76. <http://Creativecommons.Org/Licenses/By-Nc/4.0> .

¹³ Elbadawi, I., And Sambanis, N. (2000) *Why Are they So Many Civil Wars in Africa? Understanding And Preventing Violent Conflicts*. Journal Of African Economies Vol.9. 244,247.

¹⁴ Article 2 of the African charter of the rights and welfare of a child.

¹⁵ Murray, R. (2004). *Human Rights in Africa*. Cambridge University Press. Doi: <https://Doi.Org/10-1017/Cbo9780511494031> .

¹⁶ Lachman, P. (1996). *Child Protection in Africa –The Road Ahead*. Journal of Child Abuse & Neglect. Vol. 20 Issue:7. No.162211.

¹⁷ Ensor, M.O., & Reinke, J. A. (2024). *African Children's Right to Participate in Their Own Protection. Perspective From South Sudan*. International Journal of Children Rights. Vol.22.68-95. Doi:10. /163/15718182-012201003.

¹⁸ Krueger/ A., Thompstone, G., & Crispin, V. (2014) *Learning from Child Protection System: Mapping and Analysis in West Africa*. Research And Policy Implications. Global Policy. Vol. 5. Issus 1. Doi:10.11/1758-5899.12047.

realities of children in Africa¹⁹. Article 22 of the Charter obliges States to “respect and ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts which affect the child” and “take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflicts”. The Charter does not limit itself to international conflicts. “Such rules shall also apply to children in situations of internal armed conflicts, tension, and strife”²⁰. Unlike the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the provisions of the African Charter apply to all children under the age of 18 years²¹, including the provision on their recruitment and use in armed conflict. “States Parties to the present Charter shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child²²”. It is worth noting that, both the ACRWC & CRC complement each other as they provide frameworks to address children's rights issues in Africa. However, the ACRWC provisions for CIAC are not without their shortcomings. In terms of the mechanisms aimed specifically at addressing the plight of children in armed conflicts, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child overlooks the critical role that non-state actors play in the violation of children's rights during armed conflicts. This is a shortcoming because a review of the UN Secretary-General's annual reports to the UNSC on children and armed conflict shows that many more non-state armed groups than state armed forces are listed as actors who commit grave violations against children in armed conflict. The ACRWC is a legal framework that shows the AU's commitment to the protection of children in armed conflict in Africa.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study made exclusive use of secondary data to examine AU's strategies for safeguarding children in African armed conflicts. This study used multiple case studies research designs to show the grave violations committed against children. I also used triangulation as the data collection technique for the study. This technique enables us to explore multiple sources of data and test their validity through the convergence of multiple data. The data sources for the study were generated through a medium such as the United Nations Secretary-General. This data source has been verified and found to be a dependable source of information. The data were generated within a year. (2022-2024). The data analysis in this study was based on the content analysis. data generated were synthesized and critically analyzed the state of children in times of conflict. The literature for this study was carefully selected to identify, patterns and differences in data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents case studies of grave violations against children in Africa obtained from the literature. The section made a careful selection of countries in conflict in Africa and explored the situation of children's protection and rights. The section presents of cases from Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon. The presentation of cases is followed by a detailed analysis based on data from the United Nations Secretary-General and The United Children Emergency Fund.

Grave Violations Against Children in Conflict Situations in Africa

Table 1 below presents data obtained from the annual report of the UN Security Council on the situation of children in Armed Conflict from January 2022 to December 2024. It shows that grave violations against CIAC are particularly acute in Mali. The Tables show a low rate of violation in South Sudan followed by Cameroon. The UN Secretary-General says that this low figure is due to "limited monitoring capacity" in the areas. All countries listed in Table 1 below are on the agenda of the UN Security Council and in most cases both government armed forces and armed groups are implicated as being engaged in child recruitment.

¹⁹ Mzikenge, C. (2002). The Merits and Demerits of The African Charter in the Right and Welfare of a Child. The International Journal of Children's Rights. Vol.5, No.2. Pp.157. Available At <http://www.crin.org/docs/Acrwc-Merits-Demeits>. Pdf. Accessed 20 May 2024)

²⁰ Article 22 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

²¹ Article 2 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

²² Article 22(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child

The UN Secretary General’s Report points out that most of its data and statistics on the number of CIAC and post-conflict situations in Africa are indicative and in most cases underreported due to the UN’s limited monitoring capacity in some countries and government restrictions on access in others. Hence due to restrictions on access and limited capacity to monitor violations against CIAC, many children may remain invisible with perpetrators continuing to act with impunity.

Table 1: Data on grave violations against children in armed conflicts in selected AU member states from 2022-2024

Countries	Children killed& maimed	Children abducted	Children recruited by armed forces or group	Sexual violence against children
Somalia	701(7 boys, 694 girls)	2,502 (2,323 boys, 469 girls)	2,852 (2,752 boys, 100girls)	79
Central African Republic	155 (103boys, 52girls)	228(126 boys,102 girls)	713 (544boys,169 girls)	184
Democratic Republic of Congo	699	730	1545	/
South Sudan	02	19	/	23 children (3 boys, 20 girls)
Sudan	356	34 (15boys 19girls)	25 (21 boys, 4 girls)	74 (1boy, 73girls)
Cameroon	31	55	03	01
Mali	8.630	/	7,622	1.166

Source: United Nations (2022-2024)

The table shows the grave violations committed against children in times of conflict. According to the report of the UNSC, killing and maiming, recruitment, and use of children followed by abduction and sexual violation continue to be the highest in the past 3 years. A total of 1.166 children were sexually violated in Mali with the lowest verified in Cameroon. In Somalia, 2.852 cases of recruitment and use by armed forces were registered followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with 1545 cases verified. South Sudan and Cameroon registered the lowest violations despite acute conflicts plaguing the countries. This, however, is a result of low monitoring capacity in those areas.

The African Union's Strategies for Child Safety in Times of Conflict

To hold perpetrators accountable for grave violations, the African Union has made significant progress to ensure that child rights are protected. Various mechanisms have been put in place by the African Union to prevent and respond to violence. AU has adopted several strategies and policies to facilitate the structural prevention of conflicts. Apart from the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), Key legal instruments and institutions have been set up by the AU to ensure the effective protection of children's rights in Africa.

The African Union has established the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child²³. (ACERWC). An organ established in July 2001 to monitor the implementation of the African Charter on The Rights and Welfare of the Child. The ACERWC is the main body responsible for monitoring violations against children in Africa. The ACERWC also serves as the primary mechanism for the promotion and

²³ African committee of experts on the rights and welfare of the child. Available at <https://archive.crin.org/en/guides/un-international-system/regional-mechanism/african-committee-experts-rights-and-welfare.html>.

protection of child rights and welfare in Africa. The committee consists of 11 independent experts elected by the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union. The Committee has both a promotional and protective mandate and receives communications on the violations of the provisions of the ACRWC. The main functions of the committee are to collect information, monitor the implementation of the charter, interpret provisions of the charter, give recommendations for working with child rights organizations, consider individual complaints about violations of children's rights, and investigate measures adopted by member states to implement the charter by carrying out missions, collecting information, and questioning states²⁴; and choose the theme of the Day of the African Child, which is held every year on June 16 to commemorate those kind killed in the Soweto uprising in South Africa.

The ACERWC collaborates with various AU organs such as **The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**²⁵ (ACHPR). The African Commission is mandated to respond to violations of human rights, including those in the context of conflicts and political crises is charged with the protection of people's rights and human rights, and interpretation of the African Charter on Human and People's rights. The commission became operational in 1987. The ACHPR monitors the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol on Women's Rights, both of which have a bearing on children's rights and welfare²⁶. Within the framework of its promotional mandate, the main functions of the ACHPR are to collect documents, undertake studies and research on African problems in the field of human and peoples' rights, organize seminars, and consider periodic reports submitted by state parties²⁷. The ACHPR also undertakes fact-finding missions to state parties on its initiative or at the request of AU Policy Organ. Currently, the ACHPR's reports and pronouncements on peace and security issues that have had implications for human rights have tended to be less focused on children. The ACHPR is responsible for spotlighting threatened or actual violations of child rights and for ensuring that relevant AU structures, such as the Panel of the Wise, the Special Envoys, AU Liaison Offices, and AU PSOs, are deployed to address the identified challenges.

For perpetrators to face the law and be held liable and accountable for their acts, the African Union has established **The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights**²⁸ (AfCHPR). This is the main judicial body charged with human rights protection in Africa. The AfCHPR delivers binding judgment on compliance with the African Charter. The AfCHPR was established by the Protocol to the African Charter on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Charter), which was adopted by the Assembly of the OAU on 9 June 1998. The Protocol entered into force on 25 January 2004, and the first 11 judges of the Court were inaugurated on 2 July 2006. Among other human rights issues, the court has jurisdiction over the rights and welfare of children in Africa. Article 3 of the protocol extends jurisdiction to all cases and disputes submitted to it concerning the interpretation and application of the Charter. The AfCHPR has a definitive role to play in the protection of human rights on the continent, as it can pass binding decisions against states found in violation of human rights guarantees. In this regard, state parties will be required not only to "undertake to comply with the judgment in any cases to which they are parties," but also to guarantee its execution.

Difficulties in the African Union's Defense of Children During Armed Conflicts.

Despite all the efforts of the AU to ensure the effective protection of children in conflict situations, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to effectively promote the rights and welfare of children in conflict.

The primary challenge faced by the African Union is the problem of lack of resources. Funding and resources are the key tools of any institution to effectively carry out its objectives. The African Union has established institutions charged with the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the charter (ACRWC) and the two Courts all face significant problems, such as limited funding and resources, issues of universality, and

²⁴ Article 45 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

²⁵ The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: At the Forefront of Advancing Human Rights.

²⁶ Article 45 And 46 of the African Charter

²⁷ Article 62 of the African Charter

²⁸ The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR): a handy guide available at <https://www.justiceinitiative.org/publication/african-court-human-and-peoples-rights>.

monitoring, compliance, and enforcement issues²⁹. This hampers reporting and monitoring of child abuse and child rights violations in conflict situations. The lack of resources for child protection can also be attributed to the lack of political will of some AU member states to address the issue. A 2012 report by the Africawide Movement for Children (AMC) entitled *An Africa Fit for Children: Progress and Challenges* says that: generally resource mobilization and allocation towards the realization and enhancement of children's rights is weak in most African countries and there is evidence of poor governance leading to the misuse of available funds as well as lack of the necessary political will to invest in child wellbeing³⁰. Misuse of funds could mean that they are lost to corruption or are diverted for other purposes.

Moreso, holding perpetrators accountable for acts of violence is a complex issue. While some national and international mechanisms have made notable progress in addressing this problem, for the most part, accountability is hampered by several factors, such as the lack of judicial mechanisms to prosecute perpetrators of crimes against children. Efforts to include or prioritize children in non-judicial efforts tend to be weak and sporadic. Prevention efforts do not always guarantee children a safer and more secure future. Children seldom benefit from tangible improvements to their environment and quality of life because of this lack of accountability. Addressing impunity is therefore key to forging a successful child protection system on the continent³¹. About the domestication of ACRWC, there is a delay in implementing AU's reforms due to resource constraints. Is this due to lack of resources or do governments only implement these reforms in urban areas to present a façade of progress to ensure children are being protected? Though answering this question one can assert that the lack of resources for child protection in general is partly a consequence of a lack of political will by governments to prioritize children's rights.

Another challenge related to resource and capacity constraints for child protection is weak institutional capacities at the national level. Many AU's member states government bodies charged with addressing child-related issues are plagued by weak institutional capacities. The AMC agrees and observes that: limited progress has been made towards the establishment of strong and effective institutions to propel and advance the realization of children's rights at the country level in most African countries. This argument however cannot explain why some governments fail to ensure that children are not recruited into the armed forces or at least why they do not adopt a strict policy for militaries to abide by. Most of the priorities on their political agenda including poverty alleviation, education, and infrastructure development and these are usually set by external actors. Were children's protection high on national political agendas governments would include it among their set of priorities before seeking external assistance rather than making it an afterthought? In many AU member states, government bodies charged with addressing child-related issues are plagued by weak institutional capacities

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The Allocation of budget to the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Child Protection by the AU is required. The funding shows the primary obstacle to child protection. The AU should prioritize the provision of a budget to the child protection architecture, especially the technical staff in the Inter-Departmental Working Group, to ensure that they implement child protection programs effectively. Budgetary resources will enable this CPA to provide technical advice and support to Member States and Treaty Bodies, in addition to monitoring the implementation of the child protection agenda. The AU will need to develop new strategies for Mainstreaming Child Protection. With the African CPA in place, there is a need for a continental strategy and roadmap to protect children in conflict situations. This should be co-designed by the AU, RECs, CSOs, relevant Centres of Excellence, and the UN-AU Working Group on Child Protection. This strategy should be contextualized and implemented at sub-regional levels with functional regional and national coordination structures.

²⁹ Olowu, D. (2002). 'Protecting Children's Rights in Africa: A Critique of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child', *The International Journal of Children's Rights* 10, no. 2 (February): 127– 36. n at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236021258>.

³⁰ Africawide Movement for Children (AMC) (2012) *An Africa Fit for Children: Progress and Challenges*. Kampala: AMC.

³¹ African Union. (2020). *Stock Take of the African Union Responses to Child Protection in Conflict Situations*.p.78

Conclusion

Children are the most vulnerable civilian population affected in conflict situations. Despite AU's efforts children still suffer from grave violations. Thousands of children are being killed, maimed, displaced, and abducted into armed groups, in some cases into armed forces, to serve as child soldiers, sex slaves, and porters. The data generated by this study has shown the grave violations committed against children in times of conflict. The study found that the AU has adopted several strategies to mitigate this violation, but the effort is being hindered by several factors such as a lack of resources, weak institutions, and the delay in implementing AU's reforms. Though the AU has put more effort into striving for child protection in the continent, AU still faces some significant challenges that need to be addressed.

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