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## Raising armies in a rough neighbourhood

*The Military and Militarism in Southern Africa*

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*Publication date:*  
2003

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Møller, B. (2003). *Raising armies in a rough neighbourhood: The Military and Militarism in Southern Africa*. Institut for Historie, Internationale Studier og Samfundsforhold, Aalborg Universitet.

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**Bjørn Møller**

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH SERIES  
RESEARCH CENTER ON DEVELOPMENT  
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (DIR)

WORKING PAPER NO. 118

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Research Center on Development and International Relations (DIR)  
Aalborg University  
Denmark  
Development Research Series  
Working Paper No. 118

ISSN 0904-8154

*Published by*  
DIR & Institute for History, International and Social Studies  
Aalborg University

*Distribution*  
The University Bookshop  
Fibigerstræde 15,  
DK-9220 Aalborg East  
Phone + 45 96 35 80 71  
E-mail: [Info@centerboghandel.dk](mailto:Info@centerboghandel.dk)  
[www.centerboghandel.auc.dk](http://www.centerboghandel.auc.dk)

*Lay-out and wordprocessing*  
Britta Mailund

*Print*  
Centertrykkeriet, 2003

*The Secretariat*  
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# **Raising armies in a rough neighbourhood**

## **The Military and Militarism in Southern Africa**

Bjørn Møller<sup>\*</sup>

While the instruments of war, including the weaponry, are surely important, one of the “timeless verities of war” is that wars are fought by people against other people. Hence, it matters how armies are raised, as this has, among other things, an impact on the loyalty, “morale” and fighting spirit of the troops, hence also on the military power available to the state. It also has obvious implications for civil-military relations, and it may thus have a (beneficial or detrimental) impact on state building.

The following paper provides an overview of the personnel structures of the armies of Southern Africa, with a special focus on South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Angola. As an introduction the spectrum of alternatives is outlined, ranging from a militia structure over universal conscription and professionalisation to privatisation. This is followed by a brief survey of recent developments in Europe and a brief and very superficial account of the evolution of the present (Southern) African armies. Throughout this paper the term “armies” is used as a shorthand for armed forces, of which the armies (i.e. ground forces) are anyhow the most significant component, especially in Africa.

### **Introduction: How to Raise Armies**


In principle there are four ways of raising armies, and we find elements of each in Southern and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, both historically and today, just as we do in Europe.

Different countries have made different choices with regard to how to raise their armies, and no clear trend is discernable. It is counter-intuitive that one personnel

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structure should be superior, by its very nature, to all alternatives, as this cannot explain the actual diversity. That countries have opted for different personnel structures thus constitutes strong *prima facie* evidence that the choice is context-dependent, i.e. that particular personnel structures may be appropriate for some countries in certain periods, but that none is suitable for all countries at all times.

Table 1: The Personnel Structure Continuum				
Citizen-in-arms pole		Privatisation pole		
				
Ad-hoc mobilisation	Permanent Militias	Conscription	Professional all-volunteer forces	Mercenaries

In real life we find few pure (i.e. archetypal) cases, but actual personnel structures almost always represent mixtures of different types. For analytical purposes, however, the archetypes may still be useful. In Table 1 they are ordered along a continuum ranging from the “citizen in arms” model to complete professionalisation. This continuum describes different degrees of division of labour, but it also corresponds (albeit not completely) to different degrees of statehood. The latter is not particularly surprising in view of the intimate relationship between war and the state which has been highlighted in several studies (Mann 1986; 1988; 1993; Giddens 1995; Tilly 1990; Krippendorff 1984; Porter 1994; Spruyt 1994).

At the citizen-in-arms pole we have the almost stateless society (or one where state and nation are almost synonymous) in which the army *is* the population, while at the privatisation pole we have a situation where the state has outsourced the use of armed force to private firms, e.g. private military companies (PMCs) with mercenaries on their payrolls. Neither of these extremes is really compatible with traditional paradigm of the state, conceived of as enjoying a Weberian “monopoly on the legitimate use of force” (Weber 1958, p. 72). Statehood is more compatible with either of the three intermediate personnel structures, i.e. “Swiss type” militias, “European-style” conscription, and “US-style” professionals.

- “Ad hoc mobilisation” implies that the state has no standing army at its disposal. Rather, it relies on raising such armed forces if and when the need should arise.
- A permanent militia such as that of Switzerland entails an obligation of the entire (male) citizenry to defend the state in an emergency, with an accompanying duty to undergo regular training and refresher courses in times of peace. While this might arguably lead to a militarisation of society, the militia system removes the need for a standing army, except for a very small cadre, which seems to point in the opposite direction.

- Conscription entails a universal obligation for all citizens (albeit everywhere, except for Israel, confined to the male population) to defend the state and undergo training for this purpose. The standing army thus comprises an officers' corps (almost always professionals), a group of non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and the conscripts, some of which are, at any given time, "trainees". Upon termination of their active service, conscripts are often enrolled in the reserve forces, as are former officers and NCOs.
- All-volunteer forces consist of state-employed professionals for whom soldiering is a job like any other. Reserve force options are often also available for former professional soldiers.
- Mercenaries are, likewise, professional soldiers. However, in contrast to the above, they are "free agents", selling their services to the highest bidder, be that a state other than their own or non-state actors, and usually on a short-term contract basis.

By the turn of the millennium the picture of military personnel structures was a mixed one, even in Europe (for documentation see Møller 2002; Ajangiz 2002; Rödiger 1994; Dertouzos & Nation 1993; Haltiner 1998). As Table 2 shows, countries in fairly comparable positions had opted for different modes of recruitment, ranging from militia systems to professional (all-volunteer) forces. Moreover, in the course of the nineties, several countries had reconsidered their tradition of conscription, albeit for different reasons:

- The Netherlands and Belgium have effectively abolished conscription—albeit in the sense of "deactivating" it whilst maintaining the principled obligation of all citizens to do military service. France, Spain, Portugal and Italy are, likewise, phasing out conscription in favour of professional forces. The main rationale for this seems to have been a recognition that a war of national defence has become a highly unlikely eventuality, and that the armed forces are much more likely to be used for peace support operations or for ("humanitarian" or other) military interventions. For such missions professionals are deemed more appropriate, if only because they can be more rapidly deployed—and perhaps because possible casualties may be easier to justify than would be the case for conscripts.
- Russia is clearly interested in substituting smaller, professional armed forces for the present large conscript army, and it is merely waiting for the economic situation to allow it to implement this. The rationale seems to be a desire to rationalise and to capitalise on the improved security political situation facing the country after the end of the East-West confrontation.
- The situation is the same in other parts of the former USSR (e.g. Kazakhstan and Ukraine) as well as in former Warsaw Pact countries such as Bulgaria and even Hungary or the Czech Republic—some of which have now joined NATO.

- Even Turkey, which in 1990 decided to phase out conscription, but subsequently abandoned this plan, is seemingly now in the process of moving towards all-volunteer forces.

<b>Table 2: Military Manpower in European Countries</b>			
<b>Conscription</b>		<b>Abandoning conscription</b>	<b>All-Volunteer Forces</b>
<b>Regular</b>	Norway	<b>Political decision taken, but no implementation</b> Russia Bulgaria Hungary Ukraine Turkey	<b>Recent abandonment of conscription</b> Belgium Netherlands
Albania	Poland		
Belarus	Romania		
Bosnia	FRY		
Croatia	Slovakia		
Cyprus	Slovenia		
Czech Republic			
Denmark	<b>With militia elements</b>		
Estonia			
Germany	Austria		
Greece	Finland	<b>Political decision under implementation</b> France Italy Spain Portugal	<b>Tradition of professionalisation</b> Ireland Luxembourg United Kingdom
Latvia	Sweden		
Lithuania			
FYROM	<b>Pure militia</b>		
Moldova	Switzerland		

Even those countries which have taken no decisions on reform (yet) have seen serious debates on possible alternatives to whatever happens to be the prevailing form of recruitment, as was the case of the German debate on alternatives to conscription or the Swiss debate on a complete abolition of the militia army. Other countries have seen a “creeping professionalisation” without any major debate in the sense that they include a growing share of professionals in their mixed personnel structure, which is tantamount to a piecemeal phasing out of conscription—as in the Nordic countries. The share of conscripts in the total armed forces is thus steadily declining so that most West European countries are now fielding either mixed or predominantly professional armies.

We have thus seen that there remains a significant diversity with regard to the personnel structures of the armed forces, even in a fairly homogenous “region” such as “the North”. Moreover, for all the “mythology” about the “nation in arms” there seems to be no clear correlation between democracy and conscription (Bald 1993).

In the following, I shall have a look at comparable developments in Southern Africa—with some additional comments on developments in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. The focus is placed on the SADC countries with a special focus on Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. As a background to this, however, a very preliminary and superficial account of the historical background is provided.

## **African Armies: The Historical Background**

Our knowledge of the general situation in Africa before the advent of the Europeans is relatively scarce, mainly because of the almost complete absence of written sources.

### *From Pre-colonial Times to the “Scramble for Africa”*

Most armies in pre-colonial Africa seem to have consisted almost entirely of infantry, organised according to three different models: citizen armies (i.e. militias), “conscripts”, either locally enrolled and fighting under local chieftains or centrally enrolled and divided into (more or less standing) units, and professional soldiers. Many of these troops were (at least *de facto*) slaves, sometimes stemming from defeated neighbouring tribes (Vandervort 1998, pp. 3-25; Edgerton 2002, pp. 1-19).

Most of these armies were quite small, at least compared to their European counterparts. Unfortunately, they were generally also quite weak and therefore unable to hold their ground in the face of European aggression. As a general rule, the Europeans thus met with surprisingly little organised military resistance, but a few African nations and states were able to put up a strong resistance to European conquest (Edgerton 2002, pp. 21-61. For a contemporary account of the Zulu, Boer and Ashanti wars see Callwell 1996).

- The state or empire of Samora in the present Senegal and Liberia resisted the imposition of French rule until 1900 by means of an almost total militarisation of the state and an army built on the European model, numbering (*anno* 1887) an infantry of 30-35,000 men plus a 3,000 men strong cavalry (Person 1970; 1985, pp. 238-240, 259-260).
- The Ashanti empire in West Africa (roughly the present Ghana) seems to have had near universal and compulsory male military service based on a feudal form of organisation and tantamount to a levy of freemen, but its army also included slaves from vanquished neighbouring states. At full mobilisation the army numbered around 200,000 troops, which generally exhibited high fighting spirit (i.e. “morale”), springing mainly from strong unit cohesion. This was ensured by having units consist of freemen coming from the same localities, and by the fact that the slaves also belonged to families, hence also had something to lose from defeat. With the exception of a small cadre force, the organisation was similar to a militia system, consisting mainly of part-time warriors receiving no peacetime drill or training. The Ashanti Wars (1873-84) and the subsequent uprising of 1900 thus pitted a fairly well organised African army against that of the British colonialists, who had to resort to the unusual means of a predominantly white army, numbering 1,500 Europeans to a mere 700 Africans (Vandervort 1998,



pp. 14-16; Mair 1977, pp. 69-70; Fynn 1971; Brackenbury 1968; Edgerton 1995; Myatt 1966; Lloyd 1965).

- The Zulu kingdom in present KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) was based on the norm that all male youths had to serve as warriors immediately upon their formal initiation into manhood. The armies were raised locally, by means of a militia system, where the warriors lived at home but took up arms when summoned by local chieftains. Under Shaka (early 19<sup>th</sup> century) these armed forces were brought under the centralised control of the king, thus creating an almost modern standing army, where warriors were trained and garrisoned until marriage. Partly as a result of this, the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 was of a greater scale than most other colonial wars, forcing the UK to deploy around 18,000 troops, of which nearly half were Brits. Under King Cetshwayo the Zulus inflicted a crushing defeat on the British forces at Isandlwana in 1879, but they subsequently succumbed to the British invasion (Vandervort 1998, pp. 19-22, 102-112; Dodds 1998, pp. 126-146; Morris 1966; Clark 1984; Edgerton 1988; Knight 1998. For a contemporary account see Colenso 1880).
- The Matabele Kingdom on the border between the present South Africa and Zimbabwe was established by a defected Zulu chieftain. The state initially rested on the military foundations of a general conscription of all young males from the age of fifteen, forming a standing army, combined with an enrolment of all the older men in an army reserve. The raiding of neighbours (e.g. the Mashona) constituted a major source of the kingdom's income. The Matabele War (1893) was fought by the Ndbele people under King Lobengula, partly against the British settlers, partly against the neighbouring Mashona people. In this context the Mashona put up very little resistance, whereas the Europeans raised an almost militia-style army. In the later stages of the war, when this militia had been reinforced by regular troops, the Ndbele and Shona resorted to guerilla-style warfare in the great *ChiMurenga* of 1896-97, forcing the Brits to resort to the burning of *kraals* and similar measures directed against civilians. The resistance was hampered by lack of unity (i.e. Shona fear of Ndbele domination) and lack of a unified strategy, the Ndbele being more offensive than the, almost totally defensively minded, Shona (Glass 1968, pp. 1-6; Dodds 1998, pp. 149-236; Beach 1993).
- As special case was the Boer War (1899-1902), which pitted the two white "tribes" of South Africa against each other, but in which both Boers and Brits made extensive use of black African troops. Both sides were, however, in agreement that it was supposed to be "a white man's war", hence only reluctantly resorted to the use of black troops. Through most of the war, the Boers fought as guerillas and were partly organised as a militia, enrolling all able-bodied men between sixteen and sixty, without uniforms, and making extensive use also of civilian support, including women and children (Denoon 1972; Farwell 1999, pp. 41-43, 323-325, 378-391 & *passim*;

Pakenham 1992; Grundy 1983, pp. 4-5).

With a few exceptions such as the above, the Europeans in their infamous “scramble for Africa” were able to subdue the continent with military forces that were “almost absurdly small”, both because of the weak African resistance and thanks to their superior organisation. It surely also mattered that they were in the possession of advanced military technologies such as the machine guns referred to by the poet Hilaire Belloc:

*Whatever happens we have got  
The Maxim gun and they have not.*

The bulk of the troops used by the Europeans to conquer and subsequently rule the colonies were black Africans, as least as far as the rank-and-file were concerned. The Portuguese were the first to institute this practice, but all the others quickly followed their example. In all of North, East and Central Africa the British forces (the “King’s African Rifles” and the “Royal West African Frontier Force”) thus included as few as 300 whites (mainly officers and NCOs) in command of around 11,500 Africans. The corresponding figures for German forces were 226 whites to 2,600 blacks, and those of Belgium (or rather the infamous King Leopold II) in the Congo (the *Force Publique*) numbered 200 whites to 6,000 blacks—consisting mostly of mercenaries from other parts of Africa (Vandervort 1998, pp. 28, 42-47, 136-145; Howe 2001, pp. 28-31). Leopold even seems to have had a perverse preference for such African forces as had a reputation for ferociousness or even cannibalism (Hochschild 2000, p. 216; Howe 2001, pp. 29-30). Moreover, in several cases the African troops were drawn predominantly from particular ethnic groups, thereby promoting “martial tribes” and laying the foundations for later ethnic strife.

The French, likewise, made extensive use of black troops from West Africa, particularly from Senegal, even during the *Ancien Regime* and through the Revolution and the Empire—mainly in the form of volunteers (i.e. professionals), but also through the purchase (“*rachat*”) of slaves. Most famous were the *Tirailleurs Sénégalaises*, established in 1857 and used for operations in e.g. Congo, the *Soudan* (roughly the present Mali and Niger) and the rest of West Africa—but also in, e.g., Indochina and Morocco. In 1803, moreover, an unsuccessful attempt at introducing a semblance of conscription was made. The use of black volunteers continued throughout the 19th century, and in 1912 conscription was even extended to the black population of the French colonies. As many as 215,000 black troops were thus fielded during the First World War, 157,000 thereof outside their respective colonies, and 30,000 were killed in combat. After the war, however, conscription was replaced by a system relying mainly on voluntary enlistment (Davis 1934, pp. 16-19, 46-52, 134-136, 156,

166-175; Vandervort 1998, pp. 82-84, 213; Aldrich 1996, pp. 35-67, 223-224). Quite extensive use was also made of Africans (“natives”) by both the UK and France during the Second World War (Headrick 1978. On British and French military recruitment practices in their inter-war African mandate areas see Callahan 1999, pp. 92-98, 113-117).

By the end of the great “scramble”, the European colonial powers were in fairly firm control of their possessions in Africa, but only for a rather short while as their rule carried with it the seeds of its own demise. First of all, colonial rule inevitably produced opposition, which would, in due course, manifest itself in an armed struggle for independence in which many guerilla fighters benefited from the training they had received in the colonial armies. Secondly, the use of indigenous forces to uphold colonial rule “on the cheap” created the nuclei of the officers’ corps, which could, upon the achievement of independence, be instrumental in the creation of national armies (Howe 2001, pp. 35-61).

### *The Liberation Struggles*

The struggle for liberation from colonialism was primarily waged by political means, but in several colonies it also manifested itself in guerilla warfare, in which the freedom fighters used hit-and-run tactics in conformity with the guerillas strategies of Mao Zedong, Che Guevarra and others (Edgerton 2002: 63-98; Laqueur, ed. 1978; Chaliand, ed. 1982). Moreover, the guerillas sought to blend in with the local population and often belonged to it, only taking up arms periodically. Their personnel structure thus represented a mixture between ad hoc mobilisation and a militia structure.

For instance, the Mau-Mau rebellion in Kenya from 1952 until the achievement of independence in 1963 was extremely severe. It was eventually quelled, *inter alia* by the King’s African Rifles, but scattered guerilla fighters remained, known as the “forest fighters”, who even proved difficult for the new government of President Jomo Kenyatta to come to grips with in its effort to “kikuyonise” the armed forces (Edgerton 2002, pp. 78-90; Carver 1981, pp. 28-43; Howe 2001, p. 32; Buijtenhuijs 1973, pp. 41, 59-60 & *passim*; Barnett & Njama 1982; Kitson 1982).

While both the UK and France soon deciphered “the writing on the wall” and started preparing for a peaceful departure from Africa (Wilson 1994: 53-68, 112-153), Portugal fought a bitter war against liberation movements to hold on to its five colonies in Africa, especially the two most important ones, i.e. Mozambique and Angola. This Portuguese counter-insurgency war ultimately played a decisive role in bringing about a revolt against the dictatorship in Lisbon itself—not least because the conscripted army proved unsuitable to withstand the strains of colonial warfare, and because of the huge manpower

demands and casualties which the war entailed. At one stage, Portugal thus deployed no fewer than 160,000 Portuguese troops in the colonies—in addition to some 60,000 African troops (Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 86-96, 98, 158-163. See also McQueen 1997; Monslow 1983. On the struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde see Chabal 1983)—to which should be added substantial support from the white regimes of so-called “Rhodesia” and South Africa (Minter 1994, pp. 11-36; Moorcraft 1994, pp. 111-119).

- In Mozambique the liberation war was waged by FRELIMO (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) under Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel against the Portuguese, with a diversionary “sideshow” being conducted by the so-called COREMO (*Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique*), a precursor of the subsequent RENAMO (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*). By the end of the war, the Portuguese were forced to deploy around 95,000 troops in Mozambique to fight the around 25,000 FRELIMO forces, of which about 10,000 were “regular guerillas” (Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 21-22, 72-77, 86-105, 166-169. See also Mondlane 1969).
- In Angola no fewer than three guerilla movements were, at one stage, engaged in a struggle against Portuguese rule as well as against each other: the MPLA (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) under Agostinho Neto, the FNLA (*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*) under Holden Roberto and UNITA (*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*) under Jonas Savimbi—the latter two with some support from as unlikely bedfellows as the People’s Republic of China, the United States, Mobuto’s Zaïre and apartheid South Africa. The strength of the three guerilla forces remains contested, with estimates of MPLA strength ranging from 4,700 to 75,000 (*sic!*), and estimates of FNLA strength ranging from 4,000 to 10,000, while those of UNITA were hardly above 1,000 troops by 1974 (Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 19-21, 72-77, 86-105, 169-172; Marcum 1987; Moorcraft 1994, pp. 63-99; Minter 1994, pp. 11-26; Vines 2000a).

The white minority regimes in Southern Africa, likewise, experienced guerilla warfare, albeit under somewhat different circumstances.

In Zimbabwe, two major guerilla armies fought against the white regime of Ian Smith after the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) by “Rhodesia” from Britain in 1965: ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union) under Joshua Nkomo and the splinter group ZANU (Zimbabwe African Union) under Ndabaningi Sithole and his successors Herbert Chitepo and Robert Mugabe. Each had its own armed wing, i.e. the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe Liberation Army (ZLA), respectively. The numerical size of both was rather small, but not known with any certainty, contemporary estimates ranging from 200 and 8,000 by the mid-1970s

(Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 106-109; Bhebe & Ranger, eds. 1995; Meredith 2002, pp. 1-40).

In Namibia (formerly German Southwest Africa) SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) and its armed wing, PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia) fought a protracted, but most of the time low-key, guerilla war against the (illegal) South African occupation and the accompanying white minority rule from around 1963 until the achievement of independence in 1989 (Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 17-18, 109-111; Moorcraft 1994, pp. 101-109, 213-251). Even though the number of South African troops in Namibia is not known exactly, it was surely a substantial contingent, including quite a number of black troops (Grundy 1983, pp. 249-272).

Even though the struggle against white rule (i.e. apartheid) resembled the cases above in some respects, South Africa was in many other respects a case apart. First of all, the struggle was not a matter of gaining independence, but of dealing with the colonial legacy in the form of white minority rule. Secondly, by virtue of the occupation of Namibia mentioned above, South Africa belonged, to at least the same extent, to the category of "imperialists" or "colonialists" as to that of colonies. On the other hand, the very fact that the struggle was one between a black majority against a white (albeit indigenous rather than foreign) population warrants grouping it along with the other liberation struggles.

The main parties to the struggle were the ANC (African National Congress) and its armed wing, the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation" with the initials MK), while the Pan-African Congress (PAC) also waged a minor struggle by means of its armed wing, APLA., i.e. Azani People's Liberation Army (Landgren-Bäckström 1976, pp. 16-18). Even though the ANC emphasised its right to take up arms, it did not make extensive use of this right, but the struggle was all along mainly a political one in which MK activities played merely a subordinate role (On the early years of the ANC's history see Walshe 1970. See also "Report of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission to the ANC National Executive Committee" (August 1979), in Karis & Gerhart, eds. 1997, pp. 720-734).

The fact that all the aforementioned liberation and guerilla movements received support from the Frontline States (FLS) as well as from the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) and both political and some military support from the USSR, its ally Cuba, and its rival China, created the impression among (especially the Afrikaner segment of) the white population of South Africa that it was facing a "total onslaught" calling for a multi-pronged response (Minter 1994, pp. 37-39; Moorcraft 1994, pp. 161-340).

Especially since the fall of the other white minority regimes in its neighbourhood, the introduction of Cuban auxiliaries in the Angolan civil war, and the imposition of UN sanctions against the regime (Wulf 1991; *The United Nations and Apartheid, 1948-1994*), the apartheid regime responded with a far-reaching militarisation of the South African society (Evans 1989; Satchwell 1989; Cock 1991; Cawthra 1986; Gutteridge, ed. 1995; Moorcraft 1994, pp. 395-419; O'Meara 1996: 339-352. On the use of black forces in the South African Defence Force, SADF, see Grundy 1983). Conscription was reserved for the white male population, but as the struggle intensified draft dodging and desertion became more common among white South Africans (Nathan 1989; Winkler & Nathan 1989; Cawthra et al., eds. 1994), and the repressive measures taken against the “culprits” as well as other opponents of the regime served to erode the image of “democracy” for the white population.

The apartheid regime also attempted a (largely unsuccessful) “divide and rule” policy through the creation of semi-autonomous “homelands” for the blacks, each with its own small army, configured and sized to be suitable for internal security functions at the same time as obviously incapable of resistance against the SADF (Grundy 1983, pp. 224-248).

The opposing sides in the anti-colonial struggle thus covered the entire spectrum of personnel structures, from ad-hoc mobilisation to professionals—in addition to which there was an occasional resort to mercenaries as well as forceful enrolment of fighters by some of the more dubious guerilla movements (e.g. UNITA, RENAMO).

### **Independent Africa and Its Armies**

Just as armed force thus played a certain role in the achievement of independence, the armies of the new independent states have continued to play important roles in sub-Saharan Africa, both for good and bad.

Above all, independence did not bring peace, but many African nations found themselves embroiled in armed conflicts, necessitating the maintenance of substantial armies. While the number of international wars has, indeed, been impressively low in post-colonial Africa that of intra-state conflicts has been quite high, and several of these civil wars have been just as intense and destructive as wars between states. They have further resembled international wars by virtue of their frequent internationalisation. In addition to the national security functions derived from these conflicts, moreover, several African militaries have been deeply involved in domestic politics. To these problems one might add the considerable complications involved with transforming, in many cases, armed liberation movements with a distinct guerilla legacy into regular national armed forces—or integrating former insurgents into national armies.

### *Political and Social Framework*

Armies are inevitably a product of the society fielding them, just as they must reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the state commanding them. Hence, a very brief and superficial overview of these factors seems called for.

Just as is the case in the most of the Third World, African states are often “neopatrimonial” (On traditional patrimonialism see Weber 1978. On neopatrimonialism see Lemarchand 1988; Bratton & Walle 1994; 1997, pp. 61-96; Conteh-Morgan 1997; Thomson 2000, pp. 107-112; Clapham 1982), and generally weak in the sense of lacking either legitimacy or governing capacity, or both (Clapham 1996; Ayittey 1998; Ayoob 1995; Buzan 1991, pp. 153-160; Holsti 1996; Herbst 2000). The lack of generally acknowledged legitimacy is a consequence of many factors, among which the artificial borders which have produced both multinational and multi-ethnic states and divided nations, i.e. nations or ethnic groups straddling state borders (Anderson 1996, pp. 78-87; I. Griffiths 1995, pp. 84-98; Ramutsindela 2000; Herbst 2000, pp. 139-172).

The lack of a well-trained and loyal civil service, combined with a deficient infrastructure produces inadequate administrative and governing capacity, in its turn depriving the state of “performance legitimacy” (On the concept see Huntington 1991, pp. 46-58). There are different degrees of weakness, however, ranging from fairly strong states such as Botswana and Tanzania to nearly failed ones such as Angola and the DRC—and (temporarily) complete failures in West Africa (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and the Horn of Africa, not least Somalia (Du Toit 1995; Zartmann, ed. 1995; Reno 1998; Herbst 1996; Joseph & Herbst 1997; Mazrui 1998).

Not surprisingly, civil-military relations are often quite far from the ideal of civilian supremacy and military professionalism in the sense of Huntington (1956) and Janovic (1960). Often they are characterised by “praetorianism” (Huntington 1991, pp. 231-251; Finer 1976; Pearlmuter 1977; Welch, ed. 1970), e.g. manifested in military coups, as have especially taken place in West Africa, but also elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, but only rarely in Southern Africa. (Bienen 1985; Looney 1990; Gershoni 1996). Even when the armed forces have not usurped control of the state directly, they have frequently exerted political power by indirect means. Military norms and values have thus often been allowed to permeate society, which arguably amounts to a considerable militarisation of societies, the rather low military expenditures in Africa notwithstanding (Ross 1987).

Underlying most of these problems is economic weakness, which seems to become exacerbated by the progressive globalisation. Besides widespread poverty, its consequences include foreign debt, extreme vulnerability to world

market fluctuations and small tax revenues, in their turn further weakening the state (Walle 2001; Bates 1999; Callaghy 2000; Okafor & Tella 1998; Shaw 2000). Neither is the social structure of most African countries conducive to state-building, featuring low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and run-away urbanisation—in their turn fuelling ethnic strife which is often instrumentalised by leaders having their own agendas, be they a quest for power or wealth, or indeed both.

While social norms obviously differ widely, among the prevalent features is a “gun culture”, which puts a premium on the possession of the implements of violence—sometimes as a legacy of a preceding (or a reflection of a still ongoing) armed struggle. A consequence thereof is a trend towards a “privatisation of security” (Mills & Stremlau, eds. 1999; Cilliers & Mason, eds. 1999; Mandel 2001; 2002; Duffield 1998), which is tantamount to a vicious circle where general insecurity forces people to take matters into their own hands, either by arming themselves for self-protection or by soliciting the services of private security firms, but thereby simply exacerbating society’s general insecurity and contributing to the proliferation of small arms (Cock 1997; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; Oosthuysen 1996; 1998; Chetty 2000; Gamba, ed. 1997; 1998; Vines 1998).

As a result of the above social and political weaknesses, internal security missions have always loomed much larger for the armed forces in Southern Africa (and the rest of the continent) than for their European counterparts, for whom national defence has long been the primary function. African internal security missions range from counter-insurgency warfare to policing or constabulary functions, which are arguably the primary functions of the military forces, while national defence and other external functions are of lesser importance. In the following an overview of the various missions is provided, subdivided into external and internal ones.

### *External Military Functions*

In the past the apartheid regime construed the struggle of the ANC and the MK and the support provided to this struggle by the Frontline States (FLS) as a “total onslaught” by domestic and external enemies against its white “bastion”. Hence, it saw its “national defence” as requiring a “total strategy”, combining counter-insurgency warfare against the MK with military attacks against Angola and support for rebels in both Angola (UNITA) and Mozambique (Renamo). The apartheid state thus posed an external-*cum*-domestic threat to the national security of its neighbours whose national security consequently required a military defence as well as assistance from allies, e.g. manifested in the use of Cuban auxiliaries to support the government of the MPLA in Angola (Gunn 1987).



With the end of apartheid, however, it is difficult to identify any genuine national defence needs among the states of SADC—with the partial exception of the DRC, which found itself for several years in the unenviable position of serving as a battleground for just about everybody in the region, including regular military forces from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola (on the side of the government) and Uganda, Rwanda and, to a lesser extent, Burundi on the side of rebel movements (Shearer 1999; Seybolt 2000; ICG 1999a; 2000c). With the departure of the foreign troops and the progress with the inter-Congolese dialogue, however, even the DRC may soon find itself without external enemies (ICG 1999b).

That no SADC state may thus really need a national defence by military means does not automatically imply an end to external military roles. First of all, several Southern African states habitually contribute forces to UN peacekeeping missions, albeit not quite to the same extent as some other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and with a clearer emphasis on operations in Africa, i.e. (by the year 2002) in West Sahara, the DRC, Ethiopia-Eritrea and Sierra Leone (See Table 3).

<b>Table 3: African Contributions to UN Peacekeeping (Dec. 2002)</b>							
<b>Country</b>	<b>Mil Obs</b>	<b>Troops</b>	<b>MIN-URSO</b>	<b>MO-NUC</b>	<b>UN-MEE</b>	<b>UNAM-SIL</b>	<b>Other missions</b>
<b>SADC Countries</b>							
<b>Malawi</b>	18	0		x			
<b>Mozambique</b>	4	0		x			x
<b>Namibia</b>	3	2			x		
<b>South Africa</b>	7	153		x	x		
<b>Tanzania</b>	20	3			x	x	
<b>Zambia</b>	31	835		x	x	x	
<b>Benin</b>	18	4		x	x		
<b>Rest of Africa</b>							
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	12	0		x			
<b>Cameroon</b>	0	2		x			
<b>Gambia</b>	19	2			x	x	
<b>Ghana</b>	44	1,989	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Guinea</b>	14	778	x	x		x	
<b>Kenya</b>	55	1,737	x		x	x	x
<b>Mali</b>	33	1		x		x	
<b>Niger</b>	12	2		x			
<b>Nigeria</b>	50	3,159	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Senegal</b>	15	477		x			x
<b>For comparison</b>							
<b>France</b>	44	212					
<b>UK</b>	36	432					
<b>USA</b>	26	2					
<b>Source:</b> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations at <a href="http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko">www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko</a>							

Secondly, the newly inaugurated African Union has ambitions to serve as a collective security system, i.e. to “defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States”, and to develop “a common defence policy for the African continent” (*Constitutive Act of the African Union*, art. 3b and 4d; Cilliers 2001; 2002). It further intends to ensure

the effective implementation of the decisions taken in the areas of conflict prevention, peace-making, peace support operations and intervention, as well as peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, [e.g. by means of an] African Standby Force (...) composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice (*Protocol* 2002).

All of this obviously entails obligations for member states to contribute troops for deployment beyond their borders.

Thirdly, and in conformity with the fashionable norm of “subsidiarity”, which is inter alia, implied by the UN Charter’s articles 52 and 53 (D. O’Brian 2000; Vogt 1999; Wilke & Wallace 1990; Newcombe 1992), and following the example of ECOWAS in West Africa (Kwesi-Aning 1999; 2000; Howe 1996; Mortimer 1996; Vogt 1996; Wippman 1994; Jonah 1993) SADC membership entails an obligation for member states to provide mutual assistance (i.e. collective security functions) as well as to contribute to peace support operations. The organisation as well as its member states are steadily proceeding with creating the requisite capabilities for such missions (e.g. through training), which may well prove very demanding, both in manpower and logistical terms (Furley & May, eds. 1998; Olonisakin 1997; Berman & Sams 2000, pp. 151-192).

In 2001 the SADC treaty was amended (Agreement 2001; Isaksen & Tjønneland 2001), inter alia with a view to the structure, competences and objectives of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) which had been established by the SADC summit of 1996, but initially enjoyed a special status (Communique 1996; Cilliers & Malan 1997; Osei-Heide 2002). Among the objectives of the OPDS in the new formulation are the following:

... cooperate fully in regional security and defense through conflict prevention management and resolution; (...) promote peace-keeping and peace-keeping in order to achieve sustainable peace and security (...) develop a collective security capacity and conclude a Mutual Defense Pact for responding to external threats, and a regional peacekeeping within national armies that could be called upon in the region, or elsewhere on the continent; develop close cooperation between the police and security services of the region, with a view to addressing cross border crime, as well as promoting a community-based approach on matters of unity; (...) coordinate the participation of member States in international and regional peacekeeping operations, and address extra-regional conflicts which impact on peace and security in Southern Africa.

Presupposing that these stated objectives are being implemented, there is thus no end in sight for the external military activities of SADC armies, even in the absence of enemies. This is, however, not without problems, related both to personnel and to financing. With regard to personnel, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS within the armies (and societies) makes it problematic to deploy forces abroad, as this might facilitate the spread of the pandemic (Elbe 2002; Tripodi & Patel 2002; Bratt 2002). With regard to finances, deployment abroad is usually quite expensive, and subsequent reimbursement from the United Nations not always to be counted upon. Hence, an unfortunate trend is discernable towards a commercialisation of military deployments, to a certain extent allowing the forces to “live off the land” through looting and commanders to enrich themselves at the expense of the country of deployment (Dietrich 2000a)—as has been the case in the DRC, not only for the forces in support of the rebels, but also for those supporting the government (Final Report 2002).

In addition to the above military operations beyond their national borders, armies also go abroad on non-military missions, as illustrated by the South African participation in disaster relief in connection with the February 2000 floods in Mozambique (Edgerton 2002, pp. 249-250).

### *Internal Functions*

Even though SADC armies thus continue to face international challenges, internal functions tend to loom at least as large as the external ones. Indeed, the trend is in the direction of a blurring of the distinctions between internal and external missions as well as between state and non-state actors in the military domain.

In Europe and the rest of the West (or North) war and the preparations for war have been the exclusive domain of the state at least since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, just as the state has enjoyed a weberian “monopoly on the legitimate use of force” within its sovereign domain, while the international arena has remained anarchic (Walker 1993; Fowler & Bunck 1995; Krasner 1999). By implication, the external and internal aspects of security (i.e. national defence and domestic order, respectively) have been clearly separated, but both have been prerogatives of the state, represented by the army, the police and the judiciary.

While these boundaries are arguably being gradually eroded in the developed and increasingly “post modern” North (Wulf 2002; Moskos, Williams & Segal, eds. 2000), they have never been clearly demarcated in the Third World, including Southern Africa, where non-state agents have all along played significant roles as set out in Table 4. Here the term “security sector” (or “security structures”) may be a useful generic term for the multitude of

institutions which are involved in “security” (however widely defined), but usually covering such institutions as the army and police and their respective intelligence agencies as well as their respective functional equivalents in the private sector (Wulf, ed. 2000; Smith 2001; Hendrickson 1999; Hendrickson & Karkoszka 2002; Williams 2000a).

Table 4: The Security Sector	External security	Internal security		Other functions
Europe				
Mission	National Defence	Domestic Order		Rescue etc.
State agencies	Army, Navy, Air Force Intelligence service(s)	Police Internal intelligence service(s)		Army, Navy, Air Force, Police
Non-state agencies	None	PSC (Relatively few and insignificant)		Private companies
Southern Africa				
Mission	National defence	Counter-insurgency	Domestic order	Rescue etc. Economic activities
State agencies	Army, Navy, Air Force Military and foreign Intelligence service(s)	Army Internal intelligence service(s)	Police, Army	Police, Army, intelligence service(s)
Non-state agencies	PMC	PMC	PSC Neighbourhood watch and vigilante groups	PMC, PSC
Legend: PMC: Private Military Companies, PSC: Private Security Companies				

Examples of how distinctions are becoming blurred include the following:

- Armies often have domestic security as their primary goal, e.g. in the form of counter-insurgency warfare or constabulary duties.
- A major part of the “policing” tasks are performed not by state agents but by either neighbourhood watch groups, vigilante groups or private security companies.
- Mercenary companies such as the (now dismantled) Executive Outcomes and Sandline have been involved in both domestic and external forms of security, e.g. in Angola, Sierra Leone and the DRC (Musah & Fayemi, eds. 2000; Cilliers & Mason, eds. 1999; Mills & Stremlau, eds. 1999; Shearer 1998; Isenberg 1997; Mandel 2002).
- Armies do not merely engage in military activities, but sometimes also are domestic economic actors in their own right, sometimes acting as “predators” (Berdal & Malone, eds. 2002; Jean & Rufin, eds. 1996; Keen 1998), as seems to have been the case of the forces operating on opposing sides in the war in the DRC (Final Report 2002).

The boundaries between security and non-security functions are thus blurred, as is the division of labour between state and non-state actors. The resultant multitude of functions and agents presents problems with regard to both mobilisation and demobilisation of armed forces. Ideally, countries should be able to expand and contract their armed forces according to needs, but this is rarely without complications.

### *Mobilisation, Demobilisation and Personnel Structures*

The past decade has seen some demobilisation in Southern and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, yet relatively little in comparison with other parts of the world (see Table 5).

The main reasons for demobilisation in the SADC region have been the end of apartheid in South Africa and the signing of peace accords (Ohlson 1998; Ohlson & Stedman 1994), e.g. in Mozambique (Hume 1994; Synge 1997; Turner et al. 1998) and, most recently, in Angola (Memorando 2002). These peace settlements entailed a need for a simultaneous downsizing of the armed forces and dismantling of rebel troops, some of which were to be integrated with the national armed forces. The advent of democracy in South Africa not only entailed an end to the state of virtual war between the apartheid regime and the FLS, but also brought to power a new government in Pretoria, which was committed to demilitarisation (Cawthra 1997; Nathan 1994). For details see the case studies below.

<b>Table 5: Armed Forces Personnel 1990-2000</b>												<b>Figures</b>	<b>Share</b>
(Index 2000=100)													
	1990	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	2000	(000)	Pct.
<b>Africa</b>	99	87	88	87	84	84	84	80	88	97	100	2,360	11
- North	99	99	100	100	100	97	98	97	98	100	100	880	
- Central	104	123	105	105	107	114	121	89	94	100	100	160	
- West	133	132	115	115	111	108	110	102	101	101	100	180	
- East	85	41	57	55	53	50	49	48	68	91	100	850	
- Southern	119	133	119	119	100	112	106	101	105	102	100	290	
<b>For comparison</b>													
<b>America</b>	136	133	122	117	112	108	106	105	102	100	100	2,830	13
<b>Asia</b>	121	112	111	110	106	103	102	101	102	100	100	11,020	51
<b>Europe</b>	163	155	151	140	136	131	120	112	108	101	100	5,310	25
<b>Oceania</b>	130	130	130	130	113	112	112	110	110	107	100	70	0
<b>World</b>	131	123	120	116	112	108	105	102	102	100	100	21,590	100
<b>Source:</b> Based on <i>Conversion Survey 2002</i> , p. 163; Lamb 2000													

In other countries, however, the armed forces have grown, making the total picture of demobilisation (both with regard to military expenditures and the growth or reduction of the ranks) a very mixed one as shown in Table 6. Even though some of the changes may seem quite dramatic, it should be kept in mind

that the general level of militarisation in all of Africa is “almost absurdly low”, certainly compared to that of the United States, the corresponding figures for which have been added for comparison.

<b>Table 6: SADC Military Expenditures and Armed Forces</b>										
	<b>Defence Expenditure</b>				<b>Armed Forces Reserves Paramil.</b>					
	<b>US\$m</b>		<b>US\$ pc</b>		<b>Pct. Of GDP</b>		<b>Thousand</b>			
	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Angola</b>	978	1,470	112	109	15.1	17.0	49.5	130.5	n.a.	15.0
<b>Botswana</b>	56	203	52	127	1.1	3.8	4.0	9.0	n.a.	1.0
<b>DRC</b>	122	392	4	7	1.5	8.9	48.0	81.4	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Lesotho</b>	70	24	45	11	4.6	3.1	2.0	2.0	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Malawi</b>	32	6	5	0	1.0	0.3	5.3	5.3	n.a.	1.5
<b>Mauritius</b>	4	9	4	7	0.3	0.2	1.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Mozambique</b>	361	71	26	4	8.5	1.9	15.8	11.0	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Namibia</b>	n.a.	91	n.a.	51	n.a.	3.1	n.a.	9.0	n.a.	6.0
<b>Seychelles</b>	12	11	186	142	2.1	1.8	1.2	0.2	n.a.	0.3
<b>South A.</b>	4,342	1,829	130	41	2.7	1.7	106.4	61.5	89.2	5.5
<b>Tanzania</b>	212	140	10	4	4.4	1.6	40.4	27.0	80.0	1.4
<b>Zambia</b>	60	27	9	3	1.1	0.8	16.2	21.6	n.a.	1.4
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	257	267	31	23	5.6	2.9	41.0	39.0	n.a.	21.8
<b>For comparison</b>										
<b>USA</b>	390,290	322,365	1,631	1,128	6.5	3.2	2,151.6	1,367.7	1,200.6	53.0
<b>Source:</b> Figures from <i>The Military Balance 2002-2003</i> , pp. 332-336										

One of the reasons why demobilisation has been less thorough than what one might have expected is that former soldiers—be they government troops or rebels—often have no other means of existence than soldiering. This, in turn, is the almost inevitable result of generally poor economic conditions almost everywhere in Southern Africa, but especially so in countries emerging from civil war. Hence the need for targeted programmes of disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation and reintegration (DDR&R) of former combatants, the success of which may be a precondition of lasting peace.

In this connection it matters how the army (or armies) were raised, i.e. whether they have consisted of part-time soldiers (as in an ad-hoc mobilisation or militia system), of entire age cohorts of conscripts, or of professionals. The demobilisation of part-time troops is relatively uncomplicated as the former fighters can simply begin devoting all their energies to their main profession. That of conscripts can be accomplished simply by shortening the term of service, thus “only” adding to the unemployment among young people, whereas the demobilisation of professionals calls for actual jobs or available plots of land as well as for vocational training (Kingma, ed. 2000; Kingma 2002; Ball 1997; Hansen 2000). If these demobilisation benefits are not available there is a serious risk that the former soldiers will either resume the armed struggle or go into other professions where their particular skills in weapons use are called for, e.g. violent crime or mercenarism.

A particularly complicated case is that of child soldiers, which have frequently been made so through forceful abduction by rebel movements (Goodwin-Gill & Cohn 1994; Furley 1995; Malan 2000)—not only ones of dubious repute such as UNITA (Human Rights Watch 2001), the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone (Abdullah & Muana 1998; Richards 1995) or the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda (Behrend 1995; 1998), but also by arguably more reputable ones like the Sudanese SPLA, i.e. Sudan People’s Liberation Army (Peterson 2000, pp. 238-244; Jok 2001, pp. 158-159). As these child soldiers have usually had their family ties severed (or their families killed) or have otherwise been uprooted and generally brutalised, they are extremely difficult to reintegrate into society, to which should be added that they usually have no vocational training and often have not finished (or even begun) primary school.

*Summary: African Personnel Structures*

In Africa the picture of personnel structures is not uniform. The following countries were listed in 2000 by the International Institute of Strategic Studies as having conscription: Benin, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania and Togo—in most cases selective, rather than universal (*The Military Balance 2000-2001*: 260-287). Just as in Europe, changes had likewise occurred in the mode of recruitment, as countries had introduced or abandoned conscription—in some case combined with a reintegration of former insurgents.

Table 7 is a summary of the personnel strength and structures of the various SADC member states, indicating their mode of recruitment as well as recent changes in this respect. In addition a very tentative assessment of the primary missions is provided.

<b>Table 7: Personnel structures in SADC</b>							
<b>Country</b>	<b>Missions</b>	<b>Personnel structure</b>	<b>Recent Change</b>	<b>Service (Years)</b>	<b>Active forces</b>	<b>Reserves (1000)</b>	<b>Para-military</b>
<b>Angola</b>	I + F	C	1998*	2	130.5	n.a.	14.0
<b>Botswana</b>	D	P			9.0	n.a.	1.0
<b>DRC</b>	I + D	P			81.4	n.a.	5.0
<b>Lesotho</b>	D	P			2.0	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Malawi</b>	D	P			5.3	n.a.	1.5
<b>Mauritius</b>	D	P			0	n.a.	1.6
<b>Mozambique</b>	D	C	1992,1997	2	11.0	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Namibia</b>	D + F	P			9.0	n.a.	6.0
<b>South Africa</b>	D + F	P	1994		61.5	89.2	5.5
<b>Seychelles</b>	?	P			0.5	n.a.	0.3
<b>Tanzania</b>	D	C		2	27.0	80.0	1.4
<b>Zambia</b>	D	P			21.6	n.a.	1.4
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	I + F	P			39.0	n.a.	21.8
<b>Legend</b>	P: Professionals; C: Conscription, D: National Defence, I: Internal Threats, F: Foreign Military Assistance, (): on a minor scale, n.a.: not available * According to the Lusaka accord, a new national army should have been formed, including UNITA fighters, but it was never implemented. For details <i>vide infra</i>						
<b>Source</b>	<i>The Military Balance 2002-2003</i> , pp. 196-217, 336. Swaziland was not listed and has therefore been omitted.						

## Case Studies

After this general overview, I shall provide some details on developments in four SADC member states: Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola and South Africa—all of which have gone through significant changes in terms of army personnel in the course of the 1990s.

### *Zimbabwe*

Ever since the departure of the Ian Smith regime in 1980 (Krieger 1998; Ohlson 1998, pp. 82-88; Ohlson & Stedman 1994, pp. 82-91; Stiff 2000, pp. 17-37) and the final struggles between the rival liberation movements, ZANU and ZAPU, in 1981/82 (Stiff 2000, pp. 75-102, 180-200), Zimbabwe was one of the most stable countries in Africa (Du Toit 1995, pp. 77-148; Marx 1999; Taylor 1999)—and it remained so until quite recently.

The present armed forces were created through a merger of the Rhodesian army with the armed wings of ZANU (ZANLA) and ZAPU, i.e. ZIPRA (Ginifer 1995; Alao 1995). Their guerilla ancestry notwithstanding (Dabengwa 1995; Tungamirai 1995; Brickhill 1995; Moore 1995; Alao 1997), the armed forces were generally apolitical and “professional” in the Huntingtonian sense (Young 1997). Moreover, because of the relative peace within the country they were almost totally devoted to national defence missions. As a corollary of the growing economic and political crisis, however, problems have emerged—albeit not so much with the army as with the so-called “war veterans” (Stiff 2000, pp.



280-413; ICG 2000a; 2000b; 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b; Meredith 2002, pp. 133-146).

The members of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Association (ZLWVA) claim to have participated in the war of liberation (the “second *ChiMurenga*”), even though the age of some of these “veterans” obviously testifies against the veracity of these claims. In 1997 these hitherto largely ignored veterans managed to force the government to promise substantial pensions (*Zimbabwe Standard*, 30 July 2001; ICG 2001a)—which exacerbated the economic crisis (Bond & Manyanya 2002; *Economic Report on Africa 2002*, pp. 109-136). Because of the inability of the government to pay the pensions to which the vets claimed to be entitled, unrest spread. This was subsequently re-directed by President Mugabe against the commercial (and predominantly white) farmers, from whom the “veterans” sought their due compensation in the form of land, confiscated in violation of a Supreme Court ruling, without compensation and often by violent means (*Financial Gazette*, 9 August 2001. Buckle 2001. On the complex land issue see Chitiyo 2000).

Until quite recently, however, the armed forces remained neutral in the struggle. During the parliamentary elections in 2001, however, army troops and reserves (including war veterans) were on several occasions deployed against opposition rallies, just as troops were deployed (on a minor scale) against striking workers, e.g. at the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (ICG 2001a, pp. 8-9; *Financial Gazette*, 9 August 2001). An even clearer sign of “creeping politisation” was the touring of army barracks by the ZNA commander in an attempt to entice troops to rally behind the ZANU-PF (*Financial Gazette*, 24 May 2001).

A further step towards politisation and “de-professionalisation” may be the integration of war veterans in the army as reserves (*Financial Gazette*, 20 July 2001). The introduction of an army reserve was decided in 1996, intended for such tasks as are performed by home guards in many other countries. In the “Rhodesian times” the country, likewise, had a reserve army, largely made up of former white conscripts and intended to fight the ZANU and ZAPU guerillas (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 10 July 1996). The inclusion of the (highly politicised) war veterans is, however, a totally different matter.

The most recent step towards deprofessionalisation may be the announcement in 2000 of the introduction of a “national youth service”, envisaged to initially be voluntary but gradually to become compulsory for all youths between the ages of ten and thirty. While this service will include some military training, it is not at all tantamount to conscription. Rather, the intention seems to be weaken the opposition, i.e. the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) and to provide the ZANU-PF with a paramilitary arm for future confrontations, i.e. as a partial

replacement of the war veterans. The “Green Bombers”, as they are called, have already been used against supporters of the opposition (*IRIN News*, 18 December 2002 and 21 January 2003). Moreover, there have been speculations about a possible military coup if the crisis deteriorates, as well as of power struggles within the army, which may be a prelude to such a move (*The Guardian*, 29 May 2001; *IRIN News*, 31 July 2001; *Financial Gazette*, 22 February 2001).

There have also been reports of the government contemplating the declaration of a state of emergency (*Financial Gazette*, 9 August 2001), in which the armed forces would surely play a central role. In January 2003, the head of Zimbabwe’s army thus described the country’s situation as “an emergency” and called for “a national task force” to be established, involving “all arms of government” (by implication also the armed forces) to deal with it (*IRIN News*, 17 January 2003).

It is thus essential for the government of President Mugabe to ensure the future loyalty and reliability of the armed forces. One means to ensure this has been financial compensation in the form of bonuses (after an initial failure to provide subsistence allowances on time) as well as a certain restructuring (*The Star*, 5 November 2000; *The Zimbabwe Standard*, 5 and 19 November 2000). The quest to ensure army loyalty may have been a contributory motive for the military involvement of Zimbabwe in the civil war in the DRC on the side of the Kabila government and fighting against the incursions of Rwandan and Ugandan forces.

This involvement (for which Zimbabwe did receive a SADC mandate, albeit only *ex post facto*) has been very controversial—also because it has postponed the gradual reduction of the strength of the armed forces from 40,000 to 25,000, which was planned in 1998, and the material degrading of the army. Moreover, in 1999 the government went back on a previous decision to reduce military spending in favour of an increase by US\$78 million (*Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 25 March 1998, 3 June 1998, and 3 November 1999). On the other hand, the involvement in the DRC also seems to have provided opportunities for (parts of) the higher echelons of the armed forces to enrich themselves, e.g. through clandestine schemes to exploit the natural resources of the DRC, which may, in turn, have helped ensure the loyalty of the armed forces in the domestic political struggles (ICG 2001a, pp. 9-10; Global Witness 2002; *Zimbabwe Standard*, 20 May 2001; Howe 2001, pp. 97-100). With the departure of the Zimbabwean forces from the DRC in 2002, however, problems with army loyalty may be looming.

### *Mozambique*

Having fought first the Portuguese colonialists until 1974, the FRELIMO government of Mozambique almost immediately had to fight the MNR (Mozambique National Resistance) and COREMO created by the Ian Smith regime followed by the South Africa-sponsored RENAMO, consisting initially mostly of former black troops from the Portuguese forces, having sought refuge in Rhodesia, but gradually also recruiting local fighters on an ethnic basis—most troops coming from the Ndau group, which was part of the Shona “family” with ethnic kin across the border in Rhodesia (Davies 1989; Minter 1994).

RENAMO having by the early eighties lost their South African support, and the government having come to realise that a military solution was not achievable, a peace agreement was signed in 1992 between the two sides (Schneidman 1993; Hume 1994; Msabaha 1995; Paffenholz 2001; Bartoli 1999), which was subsequently implemented scrupulously with the help of, and under the supervision of the UN (Synge 1997; Reed 1996; Evans 1996; Ball & Barnes 2000; Turner & al. 1998; Ajello 1999). Ever since, political relations in Mozambique have been surprisingly peaceful—at least in the sense of an absence of organised political violence (Alden 1997; Lundin 2000).

As part of the peace Mozambique in 1992 abolished conscription (first introduced in 1978) in favour of an all-volunteer army. This was to include a sizable contingent of Renamo fighters, i.e. 15,000 of an envisaged total of 30,000 in the new FADM (*Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique*), the rest coming from the FAM, i.e. the *Forças Armadas de Moçambique* (Honwana 1995). The change was accompanied by a significant military build-down and a demobilisation and reintegration programme for former combatants (Wurst 1994; Berman 1996; Lewis et al. 1999: 147-151; Lundin et al. 2000).

Even though this has universally been lauded as a success story, some problems remain, inter alia in the form of a proliferation of small arms as a left-over from the civil war (Picasso 1999; Alden 1997). Conscription was, however, re-introduced by a parliamentary vote in December 1997, against the votes of RENAMO members of parliament, with effect from 1999. Part of the rationale was the lack of funds for an all-volunteer army, set to expand from around 5,000 to 15,000 personnel. Mozambicans between the ages of 18 and 35 were to be liable for two years’ service (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 10 December 1997 and 5 May 1999).

## Angola

The armed forces of Angola are, by far, the strongest in Southern Africa after those of South Africa, which is probably the combined result of obvious defence needs and the availability of hard currency (from oil and diamonds) with which to purchase arms and maintain a large army. The defence needs have stemmed, until the year 2002 from the protracted and almost incessant civil war between the government and the UNITA rebels (*vide supra*). Both parties to this civil war had very substantial armed forces under their command.

The fighters of UNITA have been enrolled both on a voluntary basis, especially from among the Umbundu peoples of the *Planalto* (Maier 1996, pp. 42-52), and through forceful abductions, e.g. of children down to the age of ten! (Human Rights Watch 2001). Those of the MPLA government were raised through conscription, in line with the constitution, which clearly stipulates that

The defense of the country shall be the right and the highest indeclinable duty of every citizen (...) Military service shall be compulsory. The manner in which it is fulfilled shall be established by law (Constitutional Law 1992: 152.1-2).

In actual fact, however, Angola has abolished and reintroduced conscription as well as employed it in quite an irregular manner (*vide infra*). To this rather messy picture should be added the further complication that both sides have made use of mercenaries, e.g. from the South African-based company Executive Outcomes and (since 1997), the US-based MPRI, i.e. Military Professional Resources Inc. (K. O'Brien 2000, pp. 51-54; Cleary 1999; Reno 1998, pp. 61-67; Hare 1998, p. 67; Howe 2001, pp. 187-241; Vines 2000b, pp. 172-175. On the previous use of mercenaries by the FNLA in 1975-76 see [Rogers 1998](#), pp. 67-93). The mercs have, as far as UNITA was concerned, mainly been financed through the revenue from illicit diamond sales (Dietrich 2000b; Malaquis 2001).

The Lusaka Protocol of 15 November 1994 codified the first cease-fire between the MPLA government and UNITA (Anstee 1999; Hare 1998; 1999; Lodico 1996; Munslow 1998; Sommerville 1997; Human Rights Watch 1999a). It contained two elaborate annexes outlining the military aspects of the truce: Mercenaries were to be repatriated, and UNITA forces were to be quartered, disarmed and eventually demobilised under international supervision. In due course, a new (all-volunteer) army (FAA: *Forças Armadas Angolanas*, i.e. Angolan Armed Forces) was to be created, constituting “single, national and nonpartisan armed forces obeying the sovereign organs of the Republic of Angola.” (Annex 3. II.1 at [www.angola.org/politics/p\\_annex3.htm](http://www.angola.org/politics/p_annex3.htm)). This new FAA was formally established on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1997. Annex 4 further stipulated that

The composition of the Angolan Armed Forces will reflect the principle of proportionality between Government and UNITA military forces as provided for in the Bicesse Accords (...) The military personnel in excess of the number to be agreed between the Angolan Government and UNITA for the composition of FAA will be demobilized and integrated into civilian society.... ([www.angola.org/politics/p\\_annex4.htm](http://www.angola.org/politics/p_annex4.htm))

The implementation of the protocol, however, left a lot to be desired, as UNITA quartered far fewer combatants than had been agreed to—in fact seems to have forcefully conscripted civilians (including children) as substitutes, holding their real fighters in reserve. The government, in its turn, also seems to have redeployed some of its paramilitary forces (the Rapid Reaction Police, nicknamed “Ninjas”) rather than demobilising them (Maier 1996, pp. 58-61), but some demobilisation of the regular forces did occur, especially after the implementation of a reintegration programme in 1997.

After the resumption of the armed struggle by UNITA and the escalation into a fully-fledged civil war in 1998-99, the government resorted to conscripting males between the age of 15 and 34, in a manner reminiscent of mediaeval European practices. It was described by Human Rights Watch (HRW) as

(...) a policy of preying on poor communities and unemployed young men. Those who could prove that they had jobs usually were released, and those with financial means could buy their way out of the military (Human Rights Watch 1999a).

This practice was formalised when the Angolan parliament in November 1998 decided to register all male youths approaching military age. In January 1999 the government initiated a campaign of mass conscription, calling for all males between 20 and 22 to register at municipal military posts, having already warned them against leaving Angola and emphasising that non-compliance was punishable and that draft dodgers would be immediately arrested. The formal enlistment began in April 1999 (for the first time since 1991). While putting the main blame on UNITA, HRW in its *World Report 1999* reported that

There were also abuses during forced recruitment for the Angolan military often of children. Between June and August, the government-conscripted males aged fifteen to thirty-four for combat. Extra soldiers were sent to remote areas and unemployed teenagers rounded up and sent for military training (Human Rights Watch 1999b).

UN officials complained in May 1999 that the Angolan authorities, in response to the faltering conscription drive inside Angola (with only a twenty percent success rate) had resorted to press-ganging refugees into their war effort. Allegedly FAA forces had even crossed the border into the DRC in order to round up refugees for military service (Human Rights Watch 1999b)—all of which in contravention of the Military Service Law of 1999. The first “regularly

conscripted” recruits were used in (counter-) offensives against UNITA in 1999 and 2000 (Hodges 2001, pp. 63-65; *Angola Peace Monitor*, 5:8)

With the ceasefire agreement (Luena Accord) signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2002 (Memorando 2002) after the death of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi 22 February the same year, a more promising demobilisation has been embarked upon (ICG 2003). In the process of disarmament and demobilisation, however, far more alleged UNITA fighters have turned up in the assembly camps with their families than were presumed to have been in the UNITA army in the first place. A likely explanation is that the demobilisation packages simply attracted destitute civilians, who ironically found that they would be better off posing as former “enemies of the state” than as innocent civilians.

Apart from this anomaly, however, by early 2003, the resumed demobilisation-*cum*-integration venture appeared to proceed largely according to plan, to which should be added the fact that Angolan forces had been withdrawn from their deployment in the DRC. Peace may thus, at long last, have come to this war-torn society, presenting it with new challenges of reintegration of former combatants into civilian life.

### *South Africa*

South Africa abolished conscription with the entry into force of the new constitution in 1994, partly because the “total strategy” devised by the apartheid regime under P.W. Botha had been called off, partly in an attempt to create racially balanced armed forces. The switch to all-professional armed forces was thus seen as likely to result in a “blackening of the ranks” (Seegers 1992. On the background see Cawthra 1997; Gutteridge 1995, pp. 213-241; Nathan 1996a; 1996b).

The subsequent shift to an all-volunteer army was, however, complicated by the simultaneous integration of no less than seven different armies into a new, unified SANDF (South African National Defence Force). These seven armies were the former SADF (South African Defence Force), the small armies of the four quasi-independent “homelands” established by the apartheid regime (Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda), the armed wing of the ANC (the MK) and that of the PAC, i.e. the Azani Peoples Liberation Army, APLA (Motuni 1994; Cilliers 1993). The integration was accompanied by crash training courses intended to provide (especially MK) commanders with the requisite professional skills to allow them to assume commands within the SANDF. The integration was further combined with a general reduction in size in the medium term, following a temporary swelling of the ranks in the short term (Motumi & Mckenzie 1998; Nathan 1994; 1998; Cawthra 1997, pp. 31-38, 156-162; Gutteridge 1996).

All of the above was accompanied by a profound re-orientation of the new SANDF, both with regard to missions and doctrine and in terms of organisation. First of all, the previous offensive doctrine and posture was abandoned in favour of a defensive one, no longer reflecting any ambitions to intervene abroad except as part of multinational peacekeeping operations (Haefele 1998; Mills 1996; 1997; Mtimkulu 1996; Nhlapo 1999; Potgieter 1996; Williams 2000)—even though a small-scale intervention was undertaken (with rather unimpressive results) in Lesotho in 1998 (Santho 2000; Neetling 2000; Makoa 1999; Matlosa & Pule 2001).

Secondly, major efforts were made to bring the armed forces under civilian and democratic control, e.g. by means of constitutional and legal instruments, through the establishment of a civilian defence secretariat and a parliamentary oversight committee (Fourie 1996; Nathan 1995; 1996a; 1996b; Griffiths 1995; Williams 1993; 1994; Hough & Du Plessis, eds. 2000). Democratisation was not without problems, however, e.g. because it entailed union rights for the troops in addition to the constitutional rights which the troops enjoyed in their capacity as citizens of the democratic South Africa (Malan 1994; Heinecken 1994; 1997)—making the armed forces a less pliable tool than before.

While this elaborate restructuring-*cum*-downsizing programme appears to have been successful, the new structure has not remained uncontested. In September 2000, suggestions for a re-introduction of conscriptions were thus, much to everybody's surprise, made by none other than the South African Minister of Defence (*E-news*, 18 September 2000). In a subsequent media statement by Major General Chris Pepani, issued by the SANDF Headquarters, it was explained that the idea was merely “under investigation” and that “to suggest that this is a reintroduction of conscription is not only irresponsible, but is prejudging the final result of this investigation.” The possible rationale for conscription would be to ensure a “rejuvenation” of the armed forces and “building a core for its reserves which could be a mighty tool, not only in times of war or hostility but also during times of natural disasters.” Since then, however, nothing has come of this suggestion.

Just as is the case in the other countries above, the security sector in South Africa is very diversified. Efforts have been made at reforming the police force in order to make it both more efficient and accountable to the citizens (Cawthra 1993; Gastrow & Shaw 2001), and thus to relieve the army of such policing functions as have occasionally been performed.

These reforms, however, have far from achieved a monopoly on the use of force for the state. On the contrary, private security firms have proliferated and the

number of privately owned weapons has steadily increased—both in the hands of criminals and of law-abiding citizens who dare not rely on the state to provide personal protection (Chetty, ed. 2000; Dewey 1999; Cock 1998; 1999; Ellis 1999).

Some former employees of the armed forces (mainly the SADF) have, furthermore, sought alternative employment as mercenaries, e.g. in the (until 1998) Pretoria-based private military company (PMC) Executive Outcomes. Legislation was, however, passed in 1998 to regulate its activities ([www.parliament.gov.za/acts/1998/act-15.pdf](http://www.parliament.gov.za/acts/1998/act-15.pdf)) with the result that EO closed down, while most of its activities were carried on by Sandline (Pech 1999). While the legislation did not prohibit employment in PMCs, the SANDF has adopted the practice of making the shift to private employment a one-way street, i.e. prevented military personnel who have left the ranks to become mercenaries from returning (Botha 1993; personal communication by Colonel Rocklyn Williams).

## **Conclusion**

We have thus seen that the armed forces in Southern Africa are quite diverse, as is the entire security sector. There are significant differences between countries as well as within countries over time—and it all differs a lot from the “European paradigm” of a clear separation of external from internal security and a state monopoly on the use of force for both purposes.

All the African armed forces have a basis in tradition, both from pre-colonial times and the colonial era, but even more so from the liberation struggle—and all thus have a guerilla legacy. Those of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa were created through a merger of formerly opposed armies, as was also envisaged for Angola in the Bicesse and Lusaka accords which now seem to be finally approaching implementation. All of them are attempting to create genuinely national armed forces, which are apolitical “servants of the nation”—providing for national defence and performing other military tasks (e.g. peacekeeping) as well as serving as a “melting pot” for (often diverse and sometimes mutually hostile) ethnic and other groups, thereby also creating the foundations for a strong state. None of them have, however, quite succeeded in this endeavour yet—which, it must be remembered, took the Europeans several centuries.

While shortcomings thus remain, both with regard to “professionalism” and civil-military relations in general, the most serious deficit may be in terms of capacities. Most African armed forces are incapable of a stalwart national defence, making borders “porous” and constituting a standing invitation to neighbouring states to meddle in their internal affairs, e.g. by support for rebel



movements—and only few of them are really capable of shouldering the tasks of regional peacekeeping when things go wrong. Whether the best way to address these shortcomings is to aim for large armies based on conscription or “lean but mean” professional armed forces—and whether private military companies may have a legitimate role to play—are questions, which can only be answered on the basis of further research.

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