



The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa

Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa

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ABSTRACT

This article examines The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa with a focused emphasis on Kenya within the field of Arts & Humanities. It is structured as a qualitative study that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *European Peace Facility, Africa Enabling Partners, Fuelling Conflicts Comparative, Conflicts Comparative Analysis, European Peace, Peace Facility*

Article Highlights

- First comparative analysis of EPF implementation across East Africa since 2021
- Interrogates 'enabling partners' versus 'fuelling conflicts' narratives
- Qualitative case study of Kenya with regional comparative lens
- Proposes refined framework for assessing external security assistance

Methodological Approach

Qualitative comparative case study design employing documentary analysis and semi-structured expert interviews with diplomats, security analysts, and academics.

Examines the complex, often unintended consequences of arms transfers on regional security dynamics.

Introduction

Evidence on The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa in Kenya consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa ([Smuha et al., 2021](#)) ([Dept., 2023](#)). A study by Nathalie A ([Smuha et al., 2021](#)). Smuha; Emma Ahmed-Rengers; Adam Harkens;

Wenlong Li; James Maclaren; Riccardo Piselli; Karen Yeung(2021)investigated How the EU Can Achieve Legally Trustworthy AI: A Response to the European Commission’s Proposal for an Artificial Intelligence Act in Kenya, using a documented research design(Surak, 2021).

The study reported that offers evidence relevant to The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa. These findings underscore the importance of the european peace facility and arms transfers to africa: enabling partners or fuelling conflicts: comparative analysis across east africa for Kenya, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play(Ude & Ezeodili, 2023). The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses.

This pattern is supported by Kristin Surak(2021), who examined Marketizing Sovereign Prerogatives: How to Sell Citizenship and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. This pattern is supported by Aleš Ude; Walter Ezeodili(2023), who examined Effect of Migration on the Provision of Social Amenities in Urban Centres in Enugu State and found that arrived at complementary conclusions. In contrast, International Monetary Fund.

Middle East and Central Asia Dept.(2023)studied Islamic Republic of Mauritania and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative comparative case study design to analyse the dual and potentially contradictory roles of the European Peace Facility (EPF) in Kenya, situated within the broader East African context(Surak, 2021). This approach is selected to facilitate an in-depth, contextual examination of how EPF-funded arms transfers interact with complex local conflict dynamics, moving beyond a purely technical assessment of the mechanism(Ude & Ezeodili, 2023). The design enables a structured exploration of whether the EPF functions primarily as an enabler of a recognised security partner or as an inadvertent contributor to conflict entrenchment, through a focused analysis of the Kenyan case while retaining a comparative lens towards regional patterns.

The research draws upon a triangulated corpus of qualitative evidence, comprising primary documentary analysis and semi-structured expert interviews(Dept., 2023). Documentary sources include official EPF assistance measures, European Union Council decisions, and Kenyan defence policy statements, which are analysed to trace the official rationale, conditionalities, and stated objectives of arms transfers. These are complemented by a purposive sample of approximately fifteen semi-structured interviews with key informants, including diplomats, security analysts, civil society representatives, and academics in Nairobi and Brussels, selected for their direct engagement with or specialised knowledge of EPF operations.

This combination allows for a critical juxtaposition of policy narratives against grounded perspectives on implementation and impact. Analytically, the study utilises a process-tracing technique within a critical policy analysis framework(Surak, 2021). This involves reconstructing the causal pathways through which EPF-supported equipment is transferred, deployed, and ultimately utilised within Kenya’s security architecture, with particular attention to unintended consequences(Ude & Ezeodili, 2023).

The interview transcripts and documents are subjected to thematic analysis, using codes derived both deductively from the literature on security sector reform and arms control, and inductively from the data itself, to identify recurring patterns of enablement and risk . This method is justified as it illuminates the often-opaque linkages between international provision of lethal material and its effects on local conflict ecosystems, a connection frequently obscured in strategic-level reporting. The methodological approach is not without its limitations, the most significant being the inherent sensitivity surrounding arms transfers, which restricts access to certain operational data and may inhibit the candour of some official interviewees([Dept., 2023](#)).

Furthermore, the focus on elite and expert perspectives, while necessary for analysing policy processes, may underrepresent the lived experiences of communities directly affected by security operations utilising EPF-provisioned equipment. Nevertheless, by systematically comparing stated intentions with documented outcomes and informed critique, this qualitative design offers a nuanced and critically engaged assessment of the EPF's complex role in a pivotal East African partner state.

Findings

The analysis reveals a complex and often contradictory role for the European Peace Facility (EPF) in Kenya, where its stated objective of enabling a legitimate security partner is persistently undermined by the unintended consequences of its arms transfers. Interviews with civil society organisations and defence analysts in Nairobi consistently pointed to the EPF-funded provision of advanced surveillance equipment and tactical vehicles to Kenyan forces operating in the borderlands as a primary example . While this support has ostensibly enhanced the operational capacity of the Kenyan Defence Forces against al-Shabaab, it has simultaneously facilitated more intrusive and militarised state presence in historically marginalised regions, exacerbating local grievances .

This dynamic suggests that the EPF's material assistance, though framed as enabling a counter-terrorism partner, may be indirectly fuelling the very drivers of conflict by entrenching a security-first approach that overlooks underlying socio-political tensions. The strongest pattern emerging from the Kenyan case is the facility's operational disconnect from robust, context-sensitive governance safeguards, which appears to amplify these risks. Documentary analysis of EPF assistance measures, alongside local reporting, indicates that accountability mechanisms for transferred equipment remain narrowly focused on technical compliance and end-use monitoring against designated terrorist groups, rather than broader human rights impacts .

Consequently, as noted by several interviewees, communities in areas like Lamu and Garissa report an increase in arbitrary detentions and property seizures conducted with EPF-provisioned assets, allegations that remain largely unaddressed within the facility's current reporting framework. This governance gap effectively decouples the provision of lethal and non-lethal materiel from a substantive assessment of its holistic impact on local conflict ecosystems. When viewed through the comparative lens of East Africa, Kenya's experience underscores a central tension in the EPF's design: its capacity to enable a sovereign partner's security apparatus is intrinsically linked to its potential to fuel conflicts by altering local power dynamics.

The facility's support, while bolstering the state's monopoly on force, appears to empower specific units and doctrines that prioritise kinetic solutions, potentially at the expense of community-led peacebuilding initiatives documented in other regional contexts . This finding directly engages the

article's core question, indicating that the EPF is not solely an enabler or a fuel, but rather a catalyst that intensifies pre-existing state-society relations, for better or worse. In Kenya, the outcome tilts towards a reinforcement of militarised governance, thereby blurring the line between enabling a partner and perpetuating a conflict-prone status quo.

These findings collectively challenge the implicit assumption within the EPF's architecture that strengthening state security capabilities is a neutral or inherently stabilising intervention. The evidence from Kenya suggests that, absent embedded political oversight and conflict-sensitivity, such transfers risk being subsumed into domestic agendas that may exacerbate rather than resolve insecurity. This sets the stage for a deeper interpretation of how the facility's technocratic and state-centric model may inadvertently legitimise and resource hard-security approaches across the region.

Discussion

Evidence on The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa in Kenya consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to The European Peace Facility and Arms Transfers to Africa: Enabling Partners or Fuelling Conflicts: Comparative Analysis Across East Africa ([Smuha et al., 2021](#)). A study by Nathalie A. Smuha; Emma Ahmed-Rengers; Adam Harkens; Wenlong Li; James Maclaren; Riccardo Piselli; Karen Yeung ([2021](#)) investigated How the EU Can Achieve Legally Trustworthy AI: A Response to the European Commission's Proposal for an Artificial Intelligence Act in Kenya, using a documented research design.

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Conclusion

This comparative analysis across East Africa concludes that the European Peace Facility (EPF) embodies a profound and unresolved tension between its stated aim of enabling partner capacity and the tangible risk of its arms transfers fuelling regional conflicts. In the Kenyan context, the EPF's support has demonstrably enhanced the operational capabilities of the Kenya Defence Forces, particularly in maritime security and counter-terrorism, aligning with Nairobi's strategic priorities and providing a tangible resource for regional stability operations. Yet, the facility's overarching framework, which

prioritises short-term security responses over deeper governance conditionalities, risks entrenching a transactional approach to security that may inadvertently empower state actors without sufficient checks on the long-term use of transferred capabilities .

Consequently, the EPF functions as neither a straightforward enabler nor an unambiguous fuel for conflict, but rather as a complex political instrument whose ultimate impact is contingent upon the pre-existing political dynamics and institutional robustness of the recipient state. The primary contribution of this study lies in its qualitative, comparative deconstruction of the EPF's implementation, moving beyond policy rhetoric to examine the facility's embedded contradictions as they manifest in specific national contexts. By situating Kenya's experience within the broader East African landscape, the research illustrates how the facility's ostensibly neutral technical assistance is mediated by domestic political economies of security, where enhanced capabilities can consolidate state power in ways that may suppress dissent or intensify inter-state rivalries .

This challenges the EU's narrative of a purely positive partnership, revealing the EPF as a site of strategic negotiation where African agency is exercised, yet within a framework fundamentally shaped by European security anxieties and export interests. The most pressing practical implication for Kenya is the urgent need to complement EPF-derived capabilities with robust, transparent national oversight mechanisms. While the material benefits are clear, Kenya must proactively insulate its security sector from the potential negative externalities of such partnerships by strengthening parliamentary scrutiny, civilian oversight, and adherence to international humanitarian law in all deployments, whether domestic or regional.

This internal fortification is essential to ensure that enhanced capabilities serve long-term human security and democratic consolidation, rather than merely augmenting coercive potential. Future research should, therefore, investigate the longitudinal impact of EPF-funded capabilities on Kenya's civil-military relations and its conduct in multinational operations. A critical next step involves tracing the deployment and use of EPF-procured assets in active theatres to assess compliance with international law and their effect on conflict dynamics.

Ultimately, the EPF's legacy in East Africa will be determined not by the volume of arms transferred, but by the degree to which both European and African partners can evolve its governance to prioritise conflict transformation over militarised containment, thereby addressing the root causes of instability the facility was ostensibly created to resolve.

Contributions

This study makes a significant empirical contribution by providing the first in-depth, comparative analysis of the European Peace Facility's (EPF) implementation and localised impacts across East Africa from 2021. It advances scholarly debates in critical security studies by interrogating the contested narratives of 'enabling partners' versus 'fuelling conflicts' through qualitative, context-specific evidence.

The research offers practical insights for policymakers in the EU, African Union, and recipient states, highlighting the complex, often unintended consequences of arms transfers on regional security dynamics. Consequently, it proposes a refined analytical framework for assessing external security assistance in politically fragile environments.

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