



AI Diplomacy and the African Union: Automating Conflict Mediation Protocols for Post-Conflict Reconstruction.

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Abstract

One of the most significant changes in current international relations is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the practice of diplomacy. This paper critically investigates the opportunities and limitations of automation of conflict mediation processes in the African Union (AU) framework for post-war reconstruction. Drawing from the Constructivist theory of international relations and the Technological Determinism framework, this paper contends that although AI-based tools such as early warning systems, natural language processing tools, and predictive analytics have the capacity to considerably improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the AU's Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), their uncritical adoption might threaten to marginalise indigenous epistemologies, entrench digital inequalities and undermine the sovereignty-sensitive nature of African diplomatic processes. The study is based on document analysis, secondary data from academic databases, and institutional policy reviews. The study interacts with the AU Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2024), the Peace and Security Council Communiqués on AI (2024-2026), and the Silencing the Guns initiative under the Agenda 2063. The findings show an upward institutional momentum in the AU towards AI integration in peace processes, but at the same time, gaps in data infrastructure, ethical governance and human-AI collaboration frameworks still constrain meaningful implementation. The study calls for the creation of Africa-centric AI mediation procedures that are context-sensitive, human oversight-embedded and data sovereignty-protective and which respond to the post-conflict reconstruction imperatives of Agenda 2063.

Keywords: AI diplomacy, African Union, Conflict mediation, Post-conflict reconstruction, Peace and Security Architecture



Introduction

The ability to blend artificial intelligence (AI) with diplomacy has become a hallmark of the 21st century foreign relations. Climate stress, ethnic fragmentation, resource competition, and state fragility have complicated the dynamics of global conflict, while the need for peace processes is more dynamic and requires swift and precise responses from traditional diplomatic instruments, which has been difficult (Wählich, 2025; Seul & Laiq, 2025). The limits on these are most pronounced in Africa, where the African Union (AU) has taken the primary institutional role for conflict prevention, management and post-conflict reconstruction within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The flag ship initiative of the AU under Agenda 2063 is the “Silencing the Guns” (STG), which calls for operationalisation of continental peace mechanisms such as preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) (African Union, 2013; ACCORD, 2024). Although the continent has been the target of institutional investment for decades, conflict has claimed alarmingly high numbers of lives in Africa, with 2022 seeing the most deaths from conflict compared to the last two decades (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023). In this context, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) has started a series of systematic questions on the use of AI technologies to revitalize continental peace mechanisms which will take place in June 2024, March 2025 and April 2026 (AU-PSC, 2024; AU-PSC, 2025; AU-PSC, 2026).

The notion of AI diplomacy in Africa is still in its early stages and is developing quickly. A variety of AI tools, such as machine learning conflict prediction models, NLP platforms for mediation assistance, and satellite-connected geospatial analysis, have been identified as having the potential to transform the AU's capacities in mediation (ACCORD, 2025; Musumba et al., 2021; Hegre et al., 2022). This literature has, however, largely neglected to systematically consider how such technologies could be integrated into the institutional processes that constitute the AU's post-conflict reconstruction system, and what institutional processes would be needed to address the ethical, epistemic and sovereignty-related dangers.

This paper seeks to answer these questions by posing the central enquiry: What are the institutional, ethical and governance conditions required for the legitimate and contextually appropriate use of AI in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes within the African Union? The



study is organized into five substantive sections: literature review of the use of AI in conflict resolution and diplomacy; theoretical section based on the theories of Constructivism and Technological Determinism; methodology section, an analysis of AU institutional mechanisms and the opportunities for the integration of AI, and a section of policy-oriented recommendations. AI diplomacy that is meaningful in the context of Africa should be built in conscious conversation with African epistemologies, conflict histories and institutional contexts – not simply imported as a technology from outside.

Literature Review

AI in Early Warning and Conflict Prediction

Musumba et al. (2021) show that AI-powered models perform better than conventional regression-based conflict prediction methods in sub-Saharan Africa, with five machine learning classification algorithms including random forests, gradient boosting, support vector machines and artificial neural networks. Their results imply that forecast accuracy is very sensitive to the choice of algorithm, with ensemble approaches giving the most robust forecast, and that such systems can enable the reduction of economic and social costs associated with post-conflict reconstruction by earlier intervention. Alongside this work, Hegre et al. (2022) created the ViEWS (Violence Early Warning System) automated machine learning framework for state-based violence forecasts at the PRIO-GRID and the country levels in Africa, demonstrating the viability of near-real-time, continental-scale conflict prediction models.

More recently, machine learning has been explored further as a possibility for forecasting violent conflict. As Rød et al. (2024) demonstrate, AI systems that integrate geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), social media monitoring and satellite imagery analysis can significantly enhance the precision of conflict forecasting, lowering false alarm rates and allowing humanitarian actors to mobilise resources before displacement crises materialise (Hegre et al., 2022). Similarly, Racek et al. (2024) showed the value of remote sensing data in projecting applications of war in the Syrian Civil War which might be transferable to African theatre operations. These advancements are consistent with the purpose of the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) that, as ACCORD (2024) notes, can be strengthened through the integration of social media monitoring in real-time and AI data analytics tools.



AI in Mediation Support and Diplomatic Communication

In the Harvard Belfer Center, Wählich (2025) argued that while the applications of AI in warfare have expanded rapidly in natural language processing, deep learning and geospatial analysis, diplomacy has lagged far behind and has huge potential for AI to reshape how mediators approach peace processes. In support of this assertion, ACCORD (2025) reported that AI-based NLP technologies can assist with diplomatic mediation through analysis of negotiation patterns, areas for possible consensus, and real-time advising support for peace negotiators. The AU has also experimented with AI-augmented communication tools to support inter-party interaction, especially in multilingual settings where the language barrier complicates mediation.

Yemen provides empirical proof for the usefulness of NLP in peace processes. Lindström (2020) and subsequent researchers demonstrated how NLP tools in particular, topic modelling and sentiment analysis algorithms can help mediators understand complex dialogue dynamics in protracted conflicts, uncovering hidden areas of agreement and warning of inflammatory patterns of discourse before they sidetrack negotiations. Working with the CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation in Sudan and Yemen, Wählich and Kufus (2025) demonstrated how AI-enabled digital dialogues can lead to wider and more inclusive participation in peace processes, particularly for women's groups and youth networks that are traditionally excluded from formal mediation tracks. Wählich (2025) argues that the ability of AI to forecast the outcome of negotiations based on data from previous cases enables mediators to suggest solutions that are more likely to be agreed upon, hence enhancing the efficiency of the mediation process.

AI in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Humanitarian Action

Farhan et al. (2025) reviewed the literature systematically on the use of AI in humanitarian relief and reported that AI applications have been employed for needs assessment, logistics optimisation, refugee management, and economic recovery modelling. But they added that most humanitarian AI systems are developed and evaluated in Global North settings and consequently exhibit major performance deficits when deployed in sub-Saharan Africa because of data shortages, infrastructure limitations, and insufficient localisation. Specifically, Beduschi (2021), as mentioned in Farhan et al. (2025), warned that the use of AI in the Global South without proper contextual testing and adaptation could increase global inequities.



In terms of policy, the AU PSC Communiqué of June 2024 called on the AU Commission to mainstream AI in all peace processes including, in particular, its incorporation in peacebuilding, mediation, reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction (AU-PSC, 2024). The 2026 Communiqué also reiterated Africa's sovereign right to use AI for the purposes of peace, security and development, while stressing the potential of AI to promote conflict prevention, mediation, peace support operations and post-conflict reconstruction (AU-PSC, 2026). Such institutional statements represent a major legitimization of AI integration under the APSA framework, ushering in the emergence of a formal continental policy architecture on AI diplomacy.

Ethical Governance and African Epistemological Concerns

The International Committee of the Red Cross (Pizzi et al., 2021) warned that complicated AI systems developed for marginalised groups risk cementing socio-economic inequities through employing biased training data that under-represent communities who are stigmatised or dispossessed. Guillén and Teodoro (2023), as quoted in Farhan et al. (2025), further highlighted that poor-quality and non-representative datasets are still a fundamental concern for AI humanitarian applications, demanding improved supervision systems. Madianou (2021) recorded specific examples of AI chatbot failures in the refugee camps of Kenya and Lebanon, showing the human cost of deploying AI in inappropriate contexts.

From an African epistemological perspective, Mhlambi and Tiribelli (2024) stated that African epistemologies founded in communal identity, resistance and the safeguarding of cultural heritage might be an inspiration for AI frameworks that actively reject cultural erasure and bias. They argued that AI systems that are sensitive to context and culturally inclusive are more promising for African peacebuilding than universal algorithmic models borrowed from Western contexts. This view is echoed by Ianese (2024) who warned that AI peacebuilding tools should be mindful of the unique legal, cultural, and political contexts of conflict zones, and that one-size-fits-all AI architectures risk delegitimising mediated peace deals. In sum, the research converges on the conclusion that AI diplomacy in Africa involves not only technological capacity but a conscious epistemological commitment to African agency, data sovereignty, and human-in-the-loop governance.



Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded on two complementing theoretical frameworks: Social Constructivism in international relations and Technological Determinism in science and technology studies. Taken together, these theories shed light on the social processes of incorporating AI into diplomatic practice and the structural limits of technology on these processes.

Social constructivism, as systematised by Wendt (1999) and applied in the African context by scholars such as Tieku (2012), argues that international institutions and their norms of behaviour are not given by material circumstances alone, but are constructed through the intersubjective practices and shared understandings of actors. When applied to the African Union, Constructivism reveals that the PSC's interaction with AI is determined not only by the availability of technology but also by the normative frameworks, institutional cultures, and identity narratives that characterise the AU's approach to sovereignty, pan-Africanism, and African solutions to African problems. The AU's insistence on situating AI in the context of Agenda 2063's developmental vision and on the primacy of African governance of AI most clearly defined in the 2026 PSC Communiqué expresses a constructivist logic in which technological tools are imbued with meaning and legitimacy via African institutional processes rather than simply through Western-defined efficiency metrics (AU-PSC, 2026).

The Technological Determinism theory, on the other hand, emphasises the ways in which technology impacts social and institutional outcomes in ways that players may not fully control. In its moderate or 'soft' variation, as theorised by Winner (1980) and Bijker et al. (1987), Technological Determinism maintains that technologies are not neutral instruments but embody certain assumptions, power relations and institutional logics that impact how they are employed and by whom. In the context of AI diplomacy, this framework highlights the potential for analytic biases to be embedded in conflict prediction models trained primarily on Western conflict data, the possibility that data-heavy AI platforms could deepen digital divides between resource-rich and data-scarce member states, and the risk that efficiency requirements of automated mediation systems could supplant the deliberative, relationship-building processes that are central to African diplomatic traditions.



This combination of the two frameworks creates a productive analytical tension. Constructivism emphasises how African players may actively create and fight the meaning of AI in diplomacy, claiming agency over technology integration. Technological Determinism provides a useful corrective, warning that such agency is limited by the structural elements of AI systems themselves. Together they support the paper's central argument that effective AI diplomacy within the AU requires not passive technology adoption but deliberate, normatively grounded institutional design a constructive engagement with AI's possibilities that is at the same time vigilant about its structural risks.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design, drawing on document analysis and secondary data synthesis to examine how AI can be integrated into the AU's conflict mediation and post-conflict reconstruction protocols. The methodological approach is consistent with the paper's constructivist theoretical orientation, which regards institutional texts, policy pronouncements, and scholarly interpretations as primary sources of meaning and evidence about the social construction of AI diplomacy.

The key data sources are official publications from AU institutions such as the AU Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2024), AU-PSC Communiqués on AI (June 2024, March 2025 and April 2026) and the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns. These texts are regarded as definitive pronouncements of the AU's developing normative and institutional stance on AI in peace and security. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed scholarly articles from ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Cambridge Core, MDPI and PubMed, and policy analyses from ACCORD, Amani Africa and the Harvard Belfer Center. The literature review and analysis parts are based on a systematic thematic synthesis of these resources, organised around the main research topic of the study.

The analytical methodology used for these materials is based on the conceptual lenses of Constructivism and Technological Determinism to evaluate both the institutional potential and structural constraints related to the incorporation of AI in AU conflict resolution. This entails examining the normative language of AU policy documents for clues about the discursive construction of AI in relation to African sovereignty and pan-African values, and critically



evaluating empirical studies on AI performance in conflict prediction, mediation support and humanitarian reconstruction contexts similar to those faced by the AU. The study does not include primary fieldwork or statistical analysis. Its contributions are conceptual and policy-oriented.

AI Diplomacy and the AU's Conflict Mediation Protocols

The AU's Peace and Security Architecture and Its Mediation Protocols

The African Union's Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the institutional framework for the continent's approach to conflict prevention, management and post-conflict reconstruction. APSA was established by the AU Constitutive Act (2000) and given operational expression through the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (2002). It is comprised of five pillars: the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Panel of the Wise, the Peace Fund and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) framework (African Union Commission, 2014; ACCORD, 2024). These pillars are meant to give the AU the institutional capacity to respond to conflict along the entire spectrum from prevention to rehabilitation.

The normative basis for the AU's post-conflict reconstruction activities, including security sector reform, governance and institutional rebuilding, socio-economic recovery, human rights, justice and reconciliation, is embedded in the PCRD Policy Framework issued in 2006. However, there are still capacity gaps that have hindered the implementation of PCRD, including limited funding through the Peace Fund, weak data infrastructure to monitor post-conflict environments, slow early warning responses, and overburdened diplomatic personnel (AU-PSC, 2024; Amani Africa, 2024). These structural shortcomings are precisely the operational gaps that AI-driven technologies could feasibly fill.

The June 2024 Communiqué of the AU PSC was a watershed moment. It formally instructed the AU Commission to mainstream AI in all peace processes, including the incorporation of AI in peacebuilding, mediation, reconciliation, and post-conflict reconstruction (AU-PSC, 2024). The March 2025 Communiqué underscored the establishment of an AU Advisory Group on AI, Peace, Security, and Governance, signifying the institutionalisation of AI governance under APSA (AU-PSC, 2025). During the April 2026 ministerial-level session, the sovereign right of Africa to harness AI for peace and security was reaffirmed, the AU Continental AI Strategy was welcomed



and member states were called upon to speed implementation consistent with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda (AU-PSC, 2026).

AI in Early Warning: Strengthening the Continental Early Warning System

The CEWS was established as an intelligence and early warning tool for APSA, and was mandated to continuously collect and analyse data from across the continent to provide early warning of impending conflict. In fact, the CEWS has been impeded by lack of data integration between member states, inadequate analytical capability and long information-to-action cycles (ACCORD, 2024). AI-driven innovations provide a credible solution to fill these gaps.

Machine learning conflict prediction models, such as the ViEWS system developed by Hegre et al. (2022), can draw on large amounts of heterogeneous data satellite imagery, social media discourse, economic indicators, and databases of historical conflict events to provide near real-time estimates of the probability of conflict escalation at the sub-national, national, and regional levels. According to Musumba et al. (2021), ensemble machine learning algorithms are much better than logistic regression models in predicting conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, with gradient boosting and random forest algorithms performing particularly well. The integration of such models into CEWS would significantly bolster the system's capacity to generate actionable early warnings, allowing the PSC to deploy preventive diplomacy and mediation tools before crises erupt.

ACCORD (2024) made specific reference to the possibility of combining CEWS with real-time social media monitoring tools for the detection of emerging tensions or destabilising activities, such as hate speech campaigns, displacement movements, and rumours of military mobilisation before they manifest in the form of organised violence. It is this type of AI-augmented early warning capacity that the AU's digital diplomacy framework, as articulated under the Silencing the Guns program, sees as key to the conflict prevention aims of Agenda 2063 (ACCORD, 2024). NLP-based sentiment analysis of political discourse, like that by Liebovitch et al. (2023), who used machine learning to identify linguistic patterns that distinguish high-peace from low-peace country media, provides a complementary tool for monitoring the communicative dimensions of conflict emergence across Africa's linguistically diverse information environments.



Table 1: AI Applications in AU Conflict Mediation and Post-Conflict Reconstruction

AI Tool/Application	APSA Pillar	Potential Function	Key Challenge
Machine Learning Conflict Prediction	CEWS	Forecast conflict escalation probability at country/sub-national level	Data scarcity and cross-border data-sharing deficits
NLP Sentiment Analysis	Panel of the Wise / Mediation	Monitor political discourse; detect inflammatory or conciliatory language patterns	Multilingual and low-resource language gaps
Geospatial AI / Remote Sensing	African Standby Force	Monitor troop movements, ceasefire compliance, displacement flows	Satellite coverage costs and data sovereignty concerns
AI-Facilitated Digital Dialogues	PCRD / Mediation	Enable inclusive peace negotiations, especially for women and youth	Digital exclusion of conflict-affected communities
Predictive Analytics for Reconstruction	PCRD Framework	Model economic recovery pathways, resource allocation optimization	Algorithmic bias from non-representative training data
Automated Translation / Interpretation	Panel of the Wise / Diplomatic Communication	Overcome language barriers in multilateral AU negotiations	Loss of nuance and cultural specificity in translation

Source: Authors' compilation from AU-PSC (2024, 2025, 2026), ACCORD (2024, 2025), Musumba et al. (2021), Hegre et al. (2022), Wählisch (2025)

AI in Mediation: Automating Support for Peace Negotiations

Beyond early warning, AI has great promise to improve the AU's mediation capacity during the negotiating and peacemaking stages. The Panel of the Wise, comprising five eminent African personalities undertaking advisory and good offices functions in support of the PSC conflict prevention activities, faces resource constraints that limit its capacity to monitor and analyse the complex multi-party dynamics of African peace processes simultaneously. AI-powered mediation



assistance technologies can be a way to augment this capacity, without supplanting the essential human judgement and relational trust needed for effective diplomacy.

Lindström's (2020) illustration of NLP applications in the Yemen peace process shows the sort of AI-mediation support that may be modified for AU contexts. These tools can be used to identify latent areas of potential compromise, flag escalatory discourse patterns, and help mediators navigate the complex informational demands of multi-track peace processes by applying topic modelling and sentiment analysis algorithms to negotiation transcripts and position documents. ACCORD (2025) described AU initiatives to develop AI-enabled communication tools for negotiation between disputing parties, including real-time translation and suggestions for language-appropriate framing. AI can help mediators to provide solutions with a higher probability of acceptance *ex ante* by predicting negotiation outcomes based on past case comparisons, thereby making the mediation process more efficient (Wählich, 2025).

The digital dialogues in Sudan (2023) and Yemen (2024-2025) by the CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation offer a practical model for AI-facilitated inclusive participation in peace processes, with a special focus on incorporating women's groups, youth networks and civil society actors who have been traditionally marginalised from formal negotiation tracks (Wählich & Kufus, 2025). For the model to be localised to AU processes in the Sahel, Great Lakes and Horn of Africa sub-regions will require substantial localisation efforts, not only in terms of language competence but in terms of cultural calibration to the distinctive conflict causes and trust dynamics of each environment.

AI in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Humanitarian and Developmental Applications

In the aftermath of violence, the demands on diplomatic and institutional players mount quickly. Refugees have to be managed, economies stabilised, governance institutions reconstructed and security sector reform implemented, sometimes at the same time and under conditions of continuing fragility. The AU's PCRD framework suggests an integrated, staged solution to these issues, but the realities of coordinating multi-agency, multi-state reconstruction activities have restricted its practical application (Farhan et al., 2025).

AI-based humanitarian analytics have a huge potential to improve the post-conflict reconstruction operations targeting and effectiveness. AI applications across the humanitarian spectrum from



requirements assessment to logistical optimisation, refugee registration and economic recovery modelling are directly applicable to PCRD implementation (Farhan et al., 2025). Machine learning models for displacement forecasting, as demonstrated by Hegre et al. (2022) in case studies of Mali, Burundi, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, can yield accurate projections of population movements without the need for manual conflict estimations. This reduces the burden of expertise on humanitarian responders and enables faster mobilisation of resources.

AI solutions can help governance and institutional re-construction by monitoring democratic processes, tracking disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes and assessing human rights compliance, each of which are core roles for PCRD implementation. In the AU, these operational issues are explicitly included in the STG Roadmap in the quest for conflict-free status within the framework of Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2017; Amani Africa, 2024). Yet, Farhan et al. (2025) cautioned that most AI systems used in humanitarian reconstruction have been developed and validated in Global North contexts and that their performance declines dramatically in African settings characterised by data scarcity, limited infrastructure, and fragile governance. This study suggests the necessity for Africa-centric AI development pipelines that produce training data from and for African conflict situations.

Table 2: Institutional Milestones in AU-AI Integration for Peace and Security (2022–2026)

Year	AU Institution/Mechanism	Key Development	Significance for AI Diplomacy
2022	AU Peace and Security Council	PSC 1097th Session: Emerging Technologies and New Media: Impact on Peace and Security	First formal PSC engagement with AI governance implications
2024	AU Executive Council	Endorsement of Conceptual Framework for Continental AI Strategy	Normative mandate for Africa-centric AI governance
June 2024	AU-PSC 1214th Session	Formal instruction to mainstream AI in all peace processes including mediation and PCRD	Operational mandate for AI integration into APSA
2024	AU Commission	Launch of working group on AI, member states, and Pan-African Organizations	Institutionalization of multilateral AI governance
March 2025	AU-PSC 1267th Session (Ministerial)	Establishment of Advisory Group on AI,	Specialized AI advisory body within APSA framework



		Peace, Security, and Governance	
April 2026	AU-PSC 1339th Session (Ministerial)	Reaffirmation of sovereignty right; acceleration of Continental AI Strategy implementation	Deepening of Africa-centered AI normative architecture

Source: Authors' compilation from AU-PSC (2022, 2024, 2025, 2026), *Amani Africa* (2024, 2026)

Challenges and Constraints: The Governance Deficit

Despite this institutional momentum, the effective incorporation of AI in AU mediation and PCRD protocols faces major obstacles. Three sets of difficulties deserve special attention: inadequacies of data infrastructure, ethical and epistemological hazards, and the contradiction between automation and diplomatic legitimacy.

Most urgent practical impediment is possibly inadequacies in data infrastructure. Reliable projections from machine learning-based conflict prediction models necessitate enormous volumes of high-quality conflict event data, economic indicators, and social media feeds, all of which must be geographically and temporally disaggregated. As ACCORD (2025) noted, the success of AI in African conflict prevention depends critically on multilateral cooperation for data sharing and contextualisation of AI models to African realities conditions that are difficult to attain in a continent characterised by significant digital divide within and between member states. *Amani Africa* (2024) pointed out that, as of 2024, just seven African nations including Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia have adopted national AI policies, demonstrating very varied levels of AI preparedness among the AU's 55 member states.

A second category of difficulties relates to ethical and epistemological risks. Pizzi et al. (2021) documented how biased or unrepresentative datasets used to train AI systems may entrench the marginalisation of already-vulnerable communities. This is a particularly acute concern in conflict-affected African populations where displaced persons, ethnic minorities and women are systematically under-represented in administrative data systems. UNESCO warned that the magnitude and power of AI increases inequalities between individuals, groups and nations and rather than reducing the digital divide, it could expand it (Pizzi et al., 2021). Mhlambi and Tiribelli (2024) stated that this risk can be minimised by anchoring AI frameworks in African



epistemologies, but this needs intentional community-oriented design processes, not the passive adoption of algorithmic systems produced elsewhere.

A third, and more fundamental difficulty, is the clash between automation and diplomatic credibility. Mediation methods get their legitimacy from the perceived impartiality, relational credibility and cultural competence of human mediators. Ianese (2024) suggested that AI systems, no matter how technically smart, cannot entirely substitute the contextual sensitivity and trust-building capabilities of good human diplomats. Wählich and Kufus (2025) issued a similar warning, arguing that hybrid models that combine AI analytical capacity with human facilitation are more likely to create sustainable peace than entirely automated mediation methods. Nevertheless, the AU PSC's own communiqués have continuously underlined that AI should be a complement to, rather than a substitute for, traditional diplomacy, and that local communities should be involved in the peacebuilding processes (ACCORD, 2025). To safeguard the legitimacy of AI-assisted peace processes, this human-in-the-loop approach needs to be institutionalised in formal AU mediation norms.

Discussion of Major Findings

The foregoing analysis yields several significant findings with implications for both scholarship and practice in AI diplomacy within the African Union framework.

First, the AU has transitioned from rhetorical recognition to a clear policy imperative on a path of true institutional engagement with AI for peace and security between 2022 and 2026. Taken together, the progression from the PSC's initial cautious interaction with emerging technologies in 2022, to the formal mainstreaming directive of June 2024, to the establishment of a dedicated Advisory Group in 2025 and the ministerial-level reaffirmation of sovereign AI rights in April 2026, represents a meaningful normative arc. This trajectory is consistent with the AU's broader Agenda 2063 developmental agenda. It also reflects a constructivist reading of AI diplomacy, in which African institutions express principled power over technological integration rather than simply receiving externally specified AI designs.

Second, the synergy potential between AI capacities and AU institutional demands is particularly high in the areas of early warning and humanitarian reconstruction. The data integration and



analytical capacity gaps of the CEWS are just the kinds of limitations that machine learning conflict prediction models such as the ViEWS system are designed to address, and the logistical coordination challenges of the PCRCD framework are likewise well suited to AI-driven needs assessment and resource allocation tools. These alignments show that the most promising near-term avenue for boosting APSA's operational efficacy is through tailored, domain-specific AI integration, as opposed to broad automation.

Third, the governance and ethical difficulties of AI diplomacy are structural not technical and demand purposeful institutional design, not technical remedies. The data infrastructure deficits that limit the effectiveness of AI in African conflict settings are a symptom of deeper inequalities in global digital power, while the epistemic risks of algorithmic bias are a reflection of the broader marginalisation of African knowledge systems in global technology development. Addressing these difficulties demands investment in African AI capability as well as the establishment of Africa-centric data governance frameworks, ethical standards and co-design procedures that embed African agency from the earliest phases of AI research.

Fourth, technology alone cannot solve the issue between AI efficiency and diplomatic legitimacy. The relational, trust-building aspects of effective mediation what Seul (2025) has called the cumulative institutional memory of human mediators who have developed connections over decades of conflict engagement cannot be recreated by algorithm. The conclusion reflects the AU's own perspective, frequently stated in its PSC communiqués, that AI should be a decision-support tool with sufficient human oversight and not an autonomous diplomatic agent.

Conclusion

In this study, we have analysed the opportunities and problems of incorporating AI-powered technologies in the African Union's conflict mediation procedures and post-war reconstruction framework. The study shows a picture of real institutional momentum and plausible technical promise, bordered by persisting data infrastructure shortages, ethical governance gaps, and the irreducibly human aspect of effective mediation.

The AU's emerging architecture for AI governance based on the Continental AI Strategy (2024), the PSC's AI Communiqués (2024-2026), and the advisory structures being created under Agenda



2063 provides an increasingly solid normative foundation for AI diplomacy. The AU's dilemma is not one of institutional intent, but rather institutional capacity: the ability to construct African-centric AI systems that are trained on African conflict data, guided by African ethical frameworks, and rooted in African diplomatic traditions. This necessitates international data-sharing agreements, continued investment in member state AI readiness, and the development of human-in-the-loop protocols that maintain diplomatic legitimacy while benefiting from AI's analytical capacity.

The constructivist understanding that technologies are not just used as neutral instruments, but are imbued with meaning in social processes, is especially salient here. AI diplomacy in Africa will not win by forcing algorithmic efficiency on African peace processes, but by building AI tools in careful engagement with the epistemological, institutional and relational realities of African conflict contexts. This is the core difficulty, and the core opportunity, of AI diplomacy in the African Union context.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study offer some tangible policy recommendations for the African Union, member states and the broader international community working on AI and peace in Africa.

First, the AU Commission should focus on developing Africa-centric AI training datasets for conflict prediction and CEWS integration. This includes setting up a continental data-sharing mechanism under the AU Advisory Group on AI, Peace, Security and Governance, with due data sovereignty protections and ethical safeguards for conflict-affected communities. Incentivise member states with more advanced AI infrastructure such as Rwanda, Ghana, Egypt and South Africa to exchange anonymised conflict and post-conflict data to construct common continental datasets.

Secondly, the AU ought to operationalise the human-in-the-loop notion as a formal standard in all AI-assisted mediation protocols. This includes making the precise institutional rules that delineate the respective roles of AI analytical systems and human mediators at each stage of the mediation and PCRD process, with clear accountability procedures for AI-generated advice, and mandatory human oversight of automated analytical outputs before they are applied to official AU positions.



Third, the AU Continental AI Strategy must be supported by a separate capacity-building programme aimed at the member States hardest hit by conflict and least endowed with AI infrastructure. This program should focus on training African AI practitioners, diplomats, and peace researchers in the technical and ethical aspects of AI for conflict resolution, with an emphasis on NLP tools for African languages a critical gap, considering the continent's extraordinary linguistic diversity.

Fourth, the international development partners and technology suppliers that interact with the AU on AI diplomacy should ensure that their support is aligned with African-defined priorities and governance frameworks, rather than impose externally developed AI architectures. This entails meaningful engagement of African actors in the design, testing and deployment of AI tools for peace processes, a structural change from the current paradigm of most AI humanitarian applications being developed in the Global North and tested in African settings.

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