

THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST COLONIALISM AND RACISM IN AFRICA



13-14 NOVEMBER 2025

NOVA FCSH, AUDITORIUM B1

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

13 NOVEMBER 2025

11:00h-12:00h – Panel I

Making Africa's Anticolonial Headquarters: Locating, Running and Disputing the OAU's African Liberation Committee in Dar es Salaam

Eric Burton, University of Innsbruck, Austria

This paper discusses the emergence of the OAU's African Liberation Committee (ALC) in Dar es Salaam. It embeds the ALC's origins in the establishment of earlier anti-colonial infrastructures, such as the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA)'s headquarters in Dar es Salaam, as well as institutions in Cairo and Accra in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Examining the connections between these three hubs, the paper aims to explain why the ALC became the most important institution in supporting liberation struggles on the continent right after its founding, and why it subsequently failed to live up to its own ideals of efficacy and unity, receiving criticism from various stakeholders, including liberation movements. These conflicts are outlined in highlighting disputes over the ALC's location in Dar es Salaam, as well as proposals to relocate its secretariat to other independent state capitals, such as Léopoldville and Lusaka, in 1964. Concluding with an account of the ALC's legitimacy crisis in 1966, the paper also identifies reasons why it remained one of the most important institutions in supporting liberation movements, ensuring that anti-colonial and anti-apartheid causes remained on the agenda for decades. It is based on research in British, Czechoslovak, German, Ghanaian, South African, US and Zambian archives (including state and party repositories), as well as memoirs and secondary literature.

Eric Burton is Assistant Professor of Global History at the Department of Contemporary History, University of Innsbruck. He trained in development studies, cultural and social anthropology, African history and Kiswahili in Vienna and Dar es Salaam. His doctoral thesis in history on development practices in socialist Tanzania and relations with Cold War Germany received the Walter Markov Prize of the European Network in Global and Universal History (ENIUGH). Eric was a visiting lecturer at the University of Ghana, a research fellow at the University of Leipzig, and a contributor to the Socialism Goes Global project at the University of Exeter. He is currently finalising a monograph on the entangled history of Accra, Cairo and Dar es Salaam as "hubs of decolonisation" in the late 1950s and 1960s. His work on development, socialisms and decolonisation has appeared, inter alia, in the *Journal of Global History*, *International Review of Social History* and *Cold War History*. In 2025, he was awarded the ASTRA Prize of the Austrian Science Fund / FWF for the project *Provincializing Coloniality. A Global History of 20th Century Tyrol* (2026-2031).

Fractured Solidarity: Tensions Between the OAU and African Liberation Movements

Victor Ojakorotu, North West University, Mafikeng, South Africa; **Temitope Omotayo Solomon**, Glotan Research Services, Lagos, Nigeria

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created to unite African states in the struggle against colonialism and racism. While it served as a platform for solidarity, its relationship with anti-colonial and anti-racist movements was fraught with tensions and contradictions. This paper explores instances where liberation movements, including FRELIMO (Mozambique), PAIGC (Guinea-Bissau), ANC (South Africa), SWAPO (Namibia), and rival factions in Angola and Zimbabwe, clashed with the OAU over strategy, resources, and legitimacy. Drawing on secondary sources such as historical analyses, memoirs of key leaders, and policy studies, the paper identifies patterns of disagreement stemming from the OAU's bureaucratic delays, insistence on neutrality in factional disputes, and reliance on diplomatic rather than military strategies. These tensions reveal the complex interplay between Pan-African ideals, national interests, and liberation politics. By highlighting these conflicts, the study challenges the narrative of a unified continental front and underscores how internal frictions shaped the trajectory of African decolonization and anti-apartheid struggles.

Professor Victor Ojakorotu is a scholar of international relations and an astute professor at North West University, South Africa. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. A First Class Honours graduate (BSc) from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria in International Relations and an MSc. Degree in the same school. He has actively worked at various capacities as an academic of repute in the last 28 years, specifically he worked for Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and Monash University, Johannesburg. Currently, he holds a position as Deputy Director, School of Government Studies, North West University, Mafikeng – South Africa and recently appointed as an Honorary Professor at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. His research interests span across several areas which are not limited to peace and conflict issues, social movements, environmentalism, peace advocacy and inter-ethnic harmony in local communities in Africa. Professor Ojakorotu has published over 120 articles on a range of high indexed and impact journals with over seven edited books to his credit. He has delivered several keynotes addresses and has consistently organised several conferences on topical issues relating to development and peace in Africa. Professor Ojakorotu has made significant contributions to the development of the field of international relations, his academic protegees are making waves globally. He is a dependable family man blessed with a beautiful family.

Solomon Temitope is a first-class graduate of the Department of Political Science, University of Lagos. His research interests span international relations, political economy, environmental politics, and national politics. He is a young researcher, with a strong commitment to advancing knowledge in his field. Solomon is widely regarded as a promising scholar and is committed to using his skills and expertise to make a positive impact in his community and beyond.

13:30h-15:00h – Panel II

Driving Humor and Satirical Diplomacy: Idi Amin, Inter-African Rivalry, and the OAU's Anti-Colonial Struggles

Babere Kerata Chacha, Laikipia University in Kenya

This paper examines the role of Idi Amin Dada's regime in shaping inter-African dynamics during a critical period of the OAU's campaign against colonialism and racism. While Amin publicly embraced Pan-African rhetoric and anti-imperialist discourse, his erratic diplomacy, internal repression, and shifting alliances complicated Uganda's standing within the OAU. The paper explores the complex role of Idi Amin Dada within the Organization of African Unity (OAU), focusing on how his leadership both reflected and disrupted the organization's mission to end colonialism and racism in Africa. While Amin is often remembered for his authoritarian rule, this study highlights a lesser-examined aspect of his political strategy, his use of satire, dark humor, and absurdist rhetoric as tools to mock Western imperialism and assert African pride on the global stage. Through humorous proclamations, grandiose titles, and exaggerated gestures, Amin reframed anti-colonial resistance in theatrical and performative ways that gained global attention but also embarrassed and divided African leaders. I argue that Amin's blend of satirical diplomacy and self-serving politics intensified inter-African rivalries and undermined the unity needed for the OAU's liberation agenda. The paper employs OAU records, speeches, and media portrayals, to situate Amin's communication style within the broader debate on African leadership, postcolonial nationalism, and the symbolic politics of decolonization.

Babere Kerata Chacha is an Associate Professor of African History in the Department of Social Studies at Laikipia University in Kenya. Former Director of External Linkages and the founder and coordinator of the Centre for Human Rights at Laikipia University. Chacha has been a fellow School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Junior fellow St. Antony's College University of Oxford; Fellow, Wolfson College Cambridge, Global fellow, University of New South Wales, Australia and More recently given Sarah Bartmann Award for the year 2022. In the past he has taught as an Adjunct Lecturer in history and development Studies at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton and Egerton University. Chacha has also been engaged in teaching Police Science, African Military History and Military Thought at the Kenya Military Academy in Lanet. His main research interest includes in political assassinations and human rights, but he also has wide interests in environment, terrorism, reconciliation, religion, and sexuality. He spearheaded the launch of the the study of human rights as a common core course at Laikipia University.

From Addis Ababa to New York: Somalia, the 1974 OAU Summit, and the Transnational Struggle Against White Minority Rule

Yusra Abdullahi, Leiden University, The Netherlands

This article explores the overlooked role of Somali diplomacy in shaping the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and United Nations (UN) agenda on colonialism and racism, with an emphasis on the 1974 OAU summit in Mogadishu. The summit was held in Somalia amid growing liberation movements in Mozambique, Namibia, and Rhodesia. While the summit called for armed action against Portugal and denounced white minority regimes, UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's presence reinforced the OAU's leadership position and echoed Somalia's demands for mandatory sanctions. Drawing on OAU communiqués from Mogadishu and New York, this article will argue that the summit in Mogadishu functioned

as a transnational convergence point that legitimised the OAU, under Somali leadership, to further establish itself as the main continental forum influencing the international diplomatic agenda on racial justice. Furthermore, the article will highlight how Somalia transitioned from a regional peripheral player to a geopolitical actor that served as a diplomatic bridge between OAU regional solidarity and UN global norm-setting. Lastly, by focusing on the OAU, it recasts Somalia as a pivotal architect of Pan-African diplomacy in the long 1970s.

Yusra Abdullahi is a PhD Candidate at Leiden University, where she works on the project 'African Activism at the UN.' Her research explores how African diplomats, activists, liberation movements, and women's rights advocates engaged with international organisations, including the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity, to contest colonialism, white minority rule, and gendered inequalities between 1957 and 1982. Yusra's project highlights the often-overlooked impact of African actors in shaping global debates on racial justice, sovereignty, and decolonisation, with case studies including former Rhodesia, Somalia, Uganda, and Ghana. She also studies the history of women's rights at the UN, with a keen focus on West African women diplomats and their various contributions to economic justice and international human rights. Yusra's research recovers the transnational diplomacy of African people, social movements, and states, demonstrating how they navigated competing pressures within both regional and global institutions. She is particularly interested in the intersection of international norms and African agency and how histories of the OAU and UN must be recentred to account for Southern perspectives. Prior to academia, Yusra worked directly with UN agencies and with African Union-related institutions in Addis Ababa, as well as with NGOs, embassies, and think tanks in the East and Horn of Africa. As a humanitarian advisor, she specialised in gender, conflict, and migration, bringing a breadth of practical experience to her historical research. Yusra's work bridges past and present to illuminate the African continent's critical but often invisibilised role in shaping the international order.

From Havana to Addis Ababa: Revolutionary Alliances in the Struggle against African Neo(colonialism)

Patrick Michael Ogeto, Laikipia University, Kenya & University of Cape Town, South Africa

Cuba played a significant role in African liberation struggles, particularly in Angola and other southern African nations. Driven by socialist ideals and a commitment to anti-imperialism, Cuba provided military and logistical support to liberation movements and newly independent African nations against colonial powers and apartheid regimes. This paper explores the triangular relationship between the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Cuba, and African liberation movements during the height of decolonization in the 1960s–1980s. While the OAU served as the principal continental body advocating for the end of colonial and minority rule, Cuba emerged as an unlikely but influential ally providing military, medical, and ideological support to anti-colonial forces in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Namibia. The paper interrogates how Cuba's revolutionary internationalism aligned with, diverged from, and at times intensified the OAU's liberation strategies, especially through the work of the OAU's Liberation Committee. It also examines how Cold War geopolitics, inter-African rivalries, and competing Pan-African visions influenced collaboration and tensions between African states and Cuba. Assemblage of archival sources, speeches, and liberation movement records, the paper argues that the

OAU-Cuba alliance despite ideological and strategic differences played a pivotal role in undermining colonial and apartheid regimes in Southern Africa.

I am Doctoral candidate in History at Laikipia University, with a focus on democracy, human rights, education, and colonial legacies in Kenya as well as University of Cape Town for a doctorate in African Studies, focusing on African Colonialism and its legacies on indigenous knowledge and African heritage. I am an experienced community development expert and researcher in human rights, transitional justice, and democracy.

15:30h-17:00h – Panel III

Contesting Legitimacy: OAU Diplomacy for Zimbabwean Independence in the Late 1970s

Siobhán Amelia Smith, European University Institute, Italy

There is no doubt about the OAU's support for Zimbabwean liberation. Although there were disagreements among African state leaders during the 1960s and early 1970s, the OAU refrained from endorsing one Zimbabwean nationalist faction over another. That stance changed in July 1977 when the OAU officially recognised the Patriotic Front – a coalition of ZAPU and ZANU, formed in 1976 by the Presidents of the Front-Line States – as the sole representative of the Zimbabwean liberation movement. This paper examines the contested diplomacy within the OAU's Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, as well as how the recognised and unrecognised Zimbabwean nationalists perceived the organisation's decision. These internal divisions were concealed in UN forums, and the OAU's recognition influenced broader international diplomatic negotiations in the late 1970s. The Gabon Resolution provided a diplomatic basis for sympathetic Asian and Eastern European actors at the UN to rally their support behind the Patriotic Front. It also shaped the UN General Assembly's rejection of the settlement between Rhodesian officials and internal Zimbabwean nationalists in 1978. This paper demonstrates the organisation's influence and limits of its role in UN politics and offers a critical approach to studying OAU support for ending colonialism in Zimbabwe.

Siobhán is a PhD Researcher at the European University Institute in Italy. Her thesis is titled, 'Settler independence and Zimbabwean decolonisation: an International History of Rhodesia, Zimbabwe and the United Nations, 1946-1983'. Her research builds on recent international histories that advocate for broadening the chronological and spatial parameters of decolonisation to include foreclosed or 'unsuccessful' independence claims. An examination of UN involvement in Southern Rhodesia reveals that settler colonialism not only persisted during the 'high point' of decolonisation, but there was simultaneous explicit condemnation and tacit support for settler independence at and by the UN. Her PhD thesis sheds light on this blind spot in historiographies thus far and uncovers the UN's intricate and contradictory role in decolonisation. Siobhán has coordinated the EUI's Working Groups on African History and Diplomatic/International History, organising the 'New International Histories of the UN and Decolonisation' workshop and 'New Books in African History' series. She was also a visiting student at the University of the Free State in South Africa, and has recently published a chapter on the Rhodesian Front in *Beyond Left and Right? Antiliberal Internationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Before the PhD, she completed her MA in International Relations at the University of Leiden, exploring the influence of African states on the Commonwealth during the Rhodesian crisis from 1961 to 1969. She has also held Research Assistant positions at the University of Leiden in the Faculty of Humanities and the Chair of United Nations Studies in Peace and Justice.

The Role of the OAU in the Liberation of Namibia

Chris Saunders, University of Cape Town, South Africa

I have long studied aspects of the long struggle for Namibian independence from racist South African rule. Among other work, I published a 16-page article on SWAPO and the OAU's liberation committee in the *South African Historical Journal*, 70 (1) 2018. For the Lisbon workshop I propose to rework that article and draw upon sources not known to me when I wrote it. These include an unpublished paper by Jim Brennan of Illinois and the recent article by Seane Mabitsele, 'The Influence of Methods and Tactics of the OAU Liberation Committee on the National Liberation Struggles in Africa, 1966-1973' in *Journal of African Union Studies*, 14 (1), 2025. I will now argue that, while bureaucratic infighting and other internal squabbles handicapped the work of the OAU's Liberation Committee at certain times, the Liberation Committee nevertheless made a substantial contribution to Namibia's eventual liberation. It did this by promoting SWAPO as the sole legitimate liberation movement and by providing it with financial and material assistance. It continued to give the SWAPO leadership its full support when that leadership was criticised by people both within and outside SWAPO.

Chris Saunders is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Cape Town, where he was a lecturer in the Department of Historical Studies until his retirement. He is the author of numerous works on aspects of Southern African history and historiography. He has a special interest in the way in which Namibia moved to independence in 1990 and the role of international organisations in that process. His most recent publication is, with Helder Fonseca and Lena Dallywater, *Communist Actors in African Decolonial Transitions* (De Gruyter, 2025).

Between Addis Ababa and Moscow: The ANC Women's Section Utilising Transnational Platforms in the Struggle Against Apartheid

Sofia Kulikova, HSE University, Russia & University of Pécs, Hungary

This paper explores the role of the Women's Section of the African National Congress in the transnational networks of solidarity during the 1960s-1970s, focusing on its engagement with the Organization of African Unity and the Soviet Union. While existing historiography has largely overlooked the gendered dimensions of anti-apartheid diplomacy, this research highlights how South African women activists utilized international institutions to construct their political subjectivity and gain visibility for their cause. The analysis draws on archival materials from the Committee of Soviet Women housed in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). Special attention is paid to the symbolic practices: speeches, letters, commemorative dates, and the strategic use of visual and textual media such as the journal *Soviet Woman* that positioned the ANC Women's Section within a universalist, socialist narrative of anti-imperialist struggle. The paper argues that the ANC Women's Section, although structurally dependent on the ANC and shaped by Cold War geopolitics, actively forged its own space within the global left. Through both the OAU and Soviet platforms, it articulated a unique feminist-diplomatic voice in the struggle against racial and colonial oppression.

Sofia Kulikova is a fourth-year undergraduate student of History at the Higher School of Economics (HSE University, Moscow) and, since 2025, a full-time student in the Liberal Arts program at the University of Pécs (Hungary). Her research focuses on the history of women's

movements, anti-colonial struggles, and socialist internationalism during the Cold War. She conducts archival research at the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) and the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI), working primarily with the records of the Committee of Soviet Women. Her current project explores the transnational connections between the ANC Women's Section and Soviet institutions, with a focus on gendered diplomacy, visual culture, and the symbolic performance of ideological solidarity. Sofia has presented her research at major academic conferences in Russia, including events organized by the Russian Academy of Sciences (2025), the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University, and the Higher School of Economics. Her presentations have addressed issues such as gendered Cold War development discourses, the role of Soviet-African women's exchanges, and the symbolic construction of international subjectivity. Beyond academic research, Sofia has volunteered at international conferences and has been an active participant in university research communities. She speaks Russian (native), English (C1, IELTS 8.5), and German (B1). She plans to pursue graduate studies in global history and gender studies, with a particular focus on transnational socialist networks during the Cold War.

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10:00h-11:00h – Panel IV

From OAU Solidarity to Digital Activism: Social Media and the Legacy of Anti-Colonial Struggles in Kenya

Magati Clinton, Kabete National Polytechnic in Nairobi, Kenya

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) fostered transnational solidarity to combat colonialism and racism, shaping African liberation movements. This paper explores how the OAU's legacy of collective resistance resonates in Kenya's Gen Z-led digital activism, particularly the 2024 anti-Finance Bill protests, which leveraged social media to challenge post-colonial governance rooted in colonial inequalities. Drawing on communication theory and content analysis of platforms like X and TikTok, the study examines how Kenyan youth used digital tools to mobilize against policies perceived as perpetuating economic marginalization, echoing the OAU's anti-colonial ethos. The OAU's Liberation Committee supported independence movements, but its state-centric focus often overlooked grassroots struggles over land and resources. Today, AI-driven tools like chatbots and social media amplify these localized resistance efforts, redefining anti-colonial activism in a digital age. By analyzing Kenya's digital protests alongside OAU archival records, this paper argues that social media extends the OAU's solidarity framework, empowering youth to confront post-colonial legacies of land dispossession and systemic racism. It contributes to understanding the OAU's enduring impact on transnational activism, highlighting how digital communication bridges historical anti-colonial struggles with contemporary Kenyan political movements.

Magati Clinton is a communication strategist and lecturer at Kabete National Polytechnic in Nairobi, Kenya, specializing in digital communication and its socio-political impacts. With a robust background in media and technology, he has published influential works, including studies on AI Usage in Land Management and How Gen Z of Kenya Used Social Media to

Change Kenya's Politics. His research explores how digital platforms empower youth to address post-colonial challenges, such as land disputes and systemic inequalities, which trace back to colonial legacies. As a lecturer, Clinton trains students in communication strategies that leverage technology for social change, drawing on his expertise in analyzing social media's role in political mobilization. His work on the 2024 Gen Z uprising against Kenya's Finance Bill highlights how digital activism redefines governance, resonating with the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) historical fight against colonialism and racism. For this workshop, Clinton brings a unique perspective on how the OAU's transnational solidarity informs contemporary digital movements in Kenya. By integrating communication theory, content analysis, and AI applications, his research connects historical anti-colonial struggles with modern grassroots activism, offering insights into the evolving nature of African resistance against systemic oppression. His contributions align with the workshop's aim to re-evaluate the OAU's legacy through a transnational lens.

Pan-African Resistance and the Legacy of the OAU: Reimagining the Struggle Against Colonialism and Racism in 21st Century Africa

Chiedozie Ifeanyichukwu Atuonwu, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria

This paper critically examines the legacy of Pan-African resistance through the institutional and ideological framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), evaluating its impact on contemporary struggles against colonialism and racism in 21st-century Africa. Drawing from historical archives, political theory, and postcolonial critique, the study traces the OAU's foundational role in anti-colonial solidarity and its transformation into the African Union. It argues that while the OAU institutionalized unity against foreign domination, its state-centric model often marginalized grassroots and diasporic dimensions of resistance. The paper reimagines Pan-Africanism as a dynamic, transnational praxis that transcends state boundaries, embracing de-colonial strategies, intersectional justice, and global Black solidarity. Revisiting the ideological contours of the OAU and contrasting them with emergent social movements such as #EndSARS and Rhodes Must Fall, the analysis identifies continuities and ruptures in the African liberation narrative. Ultimately, the paper calls for a re-articulation of Pan-African resistance that confronts neocolonialism, racial capitalism, and authoritarianism, emphasizing a renewed continental and diasporic alliance. This is essential for reclaiming African agency and shaping an emancipatory future rooted in justice, dignity, and sovereignty.

Dr. Chiedozie Ifeanyichukwu Atuonwu is a distinguished Nigerian social and political historian, conflict researcher, and educator. He is an Associate Professor with the History Unit at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. His scholarship lies at the intersection of African historical analysis, peace and conflict studies, and pre-colonial/post-colonial institutional development. His work not only documents past events—such as colonial administration and community relations—but also explores traditional mechanisms like age grades and chieftaincy systems as pathways to peacebuilding and development. His monograph on Old Bende Division remains a key reference on that region's colonial history, making significant contributions to Igbo and Southeastern Nigerian historiography. Atuonwu's scholarly works are deeply immersed in understanding how colonial legacies, traditional institutions, and modern political systems intersect in Nigeria's southeast. His work bridges the fields of history, culture, conflict resolution, and security studies, contributing valuable insights to both academic discourse and practical governance. His

teaching philosophy embraces an interdisciplinary, comparative, and mentorship-focused approach to teaching. With around 15 years of experience, he integrates historical theory, conflict analysis, and negotiation studies into his pedagogy, encouraging students to contextualize African historical narratives within broader global and political frameworks. His use of a comparative lens empowers students to critically engage with Africa's diverse histories—especially those of Nigeria—and fosters meaningful mentor-mente collaboration.

13:00h-14:30h – Panel V

The OAU and the Fight against Health Colonialism in Africa: The Challenges of a Failed Health Regionalism

Simplice Ayangma Bonoho, Université de Montréal, Canada

Following the creation of the OAU in 1963, it set up its own bodies with a view to countering the colonialist ambitions of the international organisations (IOs) of the United Nations system, such as the WHO. One of these bodies was the Commission Scientifique, Technique et de la Recherche (CSTR) created two years later, or the Conseil Scientifique International de Recherche sur les Trypanosomiasés (CSIRT). It was these two OAU bodies that led the fight against health colonialism in Africa, at least as far as the fight against human African trypanosomiasis (HAT) was concerned. This paper aims to untangle the conflict between the OAU and WHO authorities over the fight against HAT and its possible regionalisation in Africa. It also analyses what are the challenges of such a process. The text draws on the methodological and theoretical tools of transnational social history, and on a variety of primary and secondary sources. It ends by highlighting the reasons for the failure of such a health regionalisation project.

Simplice Ayangma Bonoho joined in 2024, the Department of History at the Université de Montréal as Assistant Professor of African History. Between 2021 and 2023, he taught at the History Department of the University of Yaoundé 1 (Cameroon) and was a Banting postdoctoral researcher at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke (Canada). Simplicie Ayangma also holds a PhD in Economic and Social History from the University of Yaoundé 1, and a Doctorat ès Lettres in General History from the University of Geneva. In 2022, he was awarded the Lombard Odier Prize by the Swiss Forum for International Politics (FSPI) for the excellence of his thesis on multilateralism and the new challenges facing multilateral diplomacy. His areas of research are the history of health, international organisations and development. He is also interested in relations between Canada and French-speaking Africa, specifically in terms of health development. Simplicie Ayangma is the author of more than twenty articles, both published and forthcoming. His book *L'OMS en Afrique centrale. Histoire d'un colonialisme sanitaire international (1956-2000)* was published in 2022 by Éditions Karthala.

The OAU and the Legacy of Colonial Land Dispossession: The Case of the Sabaot Land Defence Force in Post-Colonial Kenya

William Ndiema Kiptoch, Kenyatta University, Kenya

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) championed African decolonization, yet its engagement with localized legacies of colonial land dispossession remains underexplored. This paper examines the OAU's anti-colonial and anti-racist policies through the lens of land conflicts in Mt. Elgon, Kenya, focusing on the Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF) from 1991 to

2010. Colonial land policies, which fueled African liberation movements, left enduring grievances that the OAU's Liberation Committee rarely addressed directly, prioritizing state-led decolonization over sub-national ethnic struggles. Using Kenyan archival records and oral histories, this study argues that the OAU's focus on territorial integrity and inter-state solidarity limited its ability to support localized anti-colonial resistance rooted in land disputes. The SLDF's emergence reflects how colonial legacies persisted, challenging the OAU's pan-Africanist vision. By situating Mt. Elgon's conflicts within the OAU's broader anti-colonial framework, this paper highlights tensions between continental solidarity and local realities, contributing to a critical historiography of the OAU's role in ending colonialism and racism. It underscores the need to re-evaluate the OAU's legacy through the lens of post-colonial land struggles, offering insights into the complexities of transnational anti-colonial solidarity.

William Ndiema Kiptoch is a PhD candidate in History at Kenyatta University, Kenya, and a Part-Time Lecturer at Kabarak University, where he earned his Bachelor of Education (Arts) in History and Kiswahili and his Master of Arts in History. His research explores the historical roots of land-based conflicts in Kenya, focusing on colonial legacies and their post-independence ramifications. Ndiema's publications, including articles in the *Journal of History and Cultural Studies* and *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, analyze the Sabaot Land Defence Force and land violence in Mt. Elgon, linking colonial dispossession to contemporary ethnic tensions. As an organizer with the Young Scholars Initiative's Africa Working Group, he fosters global academic dialogue on African historical and social issues. His doctoral work investigates how colonial land policies shaped post-colonial conflicts, offering a critical perspective on decolonization's challenges. For the OAU workshop, Ndiema brings expertise in connecting localized land struggles to broader anti-colonial movements, examining how the OAU's policies interacted with sub-national dynamics. His use of archival sources and oral histories aligns with the workshop's aim to address historiographical gaps in the OAU's solidarity against colonialism and racism, contributing a Kenyan perspective to transnational analyses of African liberation.

Sense of Insurgency: Africa's Decisive Intervention in Global Terrorism Debates in the 1970-80s

Jeffrey Byrne, University of British Columbia, Canada

Despite its institutional difficulties and the perennial skepticism of Western observers, the Organization of African Unity (1963-2002) was a vital forum for establishing the norms and principles of the postcolonial international order. This paper highlights one of the OAU's most controversial and impressive accomplishments: asserting the legitimacy of violent anticolonial struggle within the UN and other international fora in the 1970-80s. In this era, collective diplomatic action on the part of the "Third World" managed to defeat intensifying Western efforts to delegitimize and cripple armed struggle by creating a global anti-terrorism regime. The OAU's role in this effort was essential. In this matter, no other grouping within the Third World was as uncompromising or as unified as the African were. At its founding in 1963, the OAU had already established the legitimacy of armed struggle and created the Liberation Committee to give substance to that principle. African diplomacy then successfully expanded that framework. While Africans were primarily concerned with the struggle against white supremacy in the Portuguese colonies and the southern end of their continent, they also explicitly extended their support to the Palestinian national cause, among others. Examining the archives of multiple countries and

international organisations, this paper shows that the OAU was a laboratory for worldwide decolonial war.

Jeffrey Byrne is Associate Professor of History at the University of British Columbia (UBC). He studied at Yale University and the London School of Economics and Political Science. He writes on the global history and contemporary ramifications of decolonization. He is the author of *Mecca of Revolution: Algerian, Decolonization, and the Third World Order* (Oxford University Press, 2016), which won the American Historical Association's Bentley Prize in World History, was a finalist for the African Studies Association's annual book prize, and received an Honorable Mention for the American Institute for Maghrib Studies' annual book prize. He has published numerous articles in leading journals in global history, African studies, and Middle Eastern studies, including *Diplomatic History*, *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *The International History Review*, and the debut issue of the *Rivista Italiana di Storia Internazionale*. His current research project, supported by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, examines the role of democracy in the strategies and goals of armed liberation movements.