

Publication

Envoy Envy? Competition in African Mediation Processes and Ways to Overcome It

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This article seeks to make sense of the dynamics of competition in African mediation processes and to outline approaches for effective cooperation between mediators. To this end, it analyzes four cases of recent peace processes: Sudan (1994-2005), Kenya (2008), Madagascar (2009-2013) and South Sudan (2013-2015). The article identifies four driving forces of competition among mediators: clashing interests of states involved in mediation, overlapping mediation mandates, incompatible norms guiding conflict resolution, and mediators' lack of performance. These factors risk undermining peace processes unless the involved mediators and guarantors take active steps to mitigate the negative effects of competition. This can be done through 'hierarchical coordination,' where a recognized authority takes the lead and allocates roles to other actors, or through 'collaborative cooperation,' where partners have unity of purpose and decide on a division of labor based on comparative strengths.

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