In February 2013, the **Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation** (AIPR) and the African Union Commission (AUC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding toward building regional and sub-regional programs in genocide and mass atrocity prevention. Today, AIPR’s African Programs, headed by Program Director Dr. Ashad Sentongo, are directly working with individual practitioners, regional organizations, and national mechanisms on genocide and mass atrocity prevention to build capacity across the African continent to prevent such processes from unfolding. Our programs in Africa aim to familiarize AUC officials and Member States with the concept of genocide, its relation to the broader category of mass atrocity, and the process by which they occur.

In order to promote and widen the spectrum of timely interventions, effective humanitarian assistance, and increased monitoring of at-risk Member States within the AUC community — all with the goal of preventing genocide and mass atrocities — AIPR’s African Programs operate according to three core principles:

1) **Providing genocide and mass atrocity prevention education.** This is done by way of seminars and the production of a resource manual to familiarize leaders with genocide and mass atrocity, and the process by which they occur.

2) **Offering practical and in-depth training and technical assistance on genocide and mass atrocity prevention for focal points and other actors within AU Member States by experienced instructors.** As states develop mechanisms and bodies tasked with spotting and reacting to early warning signs, they are in constant need of regular training and maintenance to improve the overall system fitness of the mechanism. AIPR conducts regular trainings with government officials from a wide spectrum of state ministries to provide the latest skills and competencies in atrocity crimes prevention. The African Programs also offer further training assistance through the development of national action plans and infrastructural elements for prevention-specific policy formulation and implementation to meet self-identified needs for democracy, human rights, election management and governance, as necessary conditions for genocide and mass atrocity prevention.

3) **Increasing international and inter-regional linkages on the African continent, including a wide spectrum of practitioners, to ensure**
the most comprehensive and thorough approach to prevention. This entails increasing the inter-connectivity of existing regional bodies as well as conducting regular consultations with civil society, national, regional, and sub-regional actors to assess our programs’ cooperative aspects and effectiveness, ensuring that individual states are the driving force under the supervision of the African Union Commission.

At the moment AIPR’s African Programs are currently working on several different initiatives across the African continent. Under the MOU signed with the AUC, AIPR has focused much of its work as of late on partnering with AUC member states in the Great Lakes Region. Through membership in various regional inter-governmental organizations, many of these states have a binding obligation to establish and maintain a national committee for the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities. AIPR has been working directly with these committees to facilitate their launch, develop national action plans that respond directly to their local needs, and further build the capacity of these committees to fulfill their mandate.

In January 2015, AIPR brought together 11 AUC member states in East Africa to partake in a regional seminar for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention in Kampala, Uganda. The program allowed member states to evaluate both their national and regional capacity to prevent and respond to such crimes. In addition this seminar provided training to bolster and reinforce participant states’ knowledge and technical capacity to prevent genocide and mass atrocity. In regard to AIPR’s work at the national level, in late 2014, as part of our work to strengthen national mechanisms devoted to prevention, our Africa Program co-organized a three-day training of Tanzania’s National Committee for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and all forms of Discrimination (TNC) in Dar es Salaam. This seminar was the second in our series of trainings for the TNC and focused specifically on the prevention of electoral and resource-based violence - two issues of particular relevance in the Tanzanian context. Similar efforts are taking place both with other national committees in the Great Lakes Region and with other regional networks.

AIPR believes that decades of political instability and armed conflicts on the African continent are best solved by investing in preventive mechanisms that will sustainably curb future conflict and therefore as Member States begin to participate in AIPR’s African Programs, collaborative efforts will aim to accomplish shared objectives of preventing genocide and atrocity crimes.