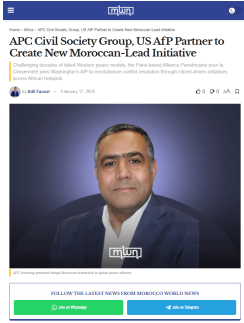


APC Civil Society Group, US AfP Partner to Create New Moroccan-Lead Initiative

Challenging decades of failed Western peace models, the Paris-based Alliance Panafricaine pour la Citoyenneté joins Washington's AfP to revolutionize conflict resolution through citizen-driven initiatives across African hotspots.

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Doha — Being the first Moroccan to serve in this respected institution carries enormous responsibility, especially given the major challenges our English faces — from the Moroccan Sahara to African leadership, African initiatives, Sahelian development, and Euro-African business mobility,” says Moroccan El Abbouch.

In these words, El Abbouch pointed to his work at the Alliance for Peacebuilding (APF), describing his new role at the institution. The founding president of the Alliance Française pour le Développement (AFD), a Paris-based civil society organization whose focus is on Africa, conveyed these reflections during his interview with Morocco World News (MWN).

In early 2025, APC announced its membership in AFD, a Washington-based platform comprising over 200 organizations. This strategic move heralds a new era in mobilizing African citizens for grassroots peace-building and prosperity initiatives. The partnership aims to strengthen citizens’ engagement in peace processes across Africa, with a particular focus on the Sahel region.

The APF operates with support from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), an independent, nonpartisan organization established by Congress. The Institute has developed an extensive African program examining and supporting peace-building efforts across the continent.

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El Abbouch explained that APC represents a fundamental shift in the pan-African revolution, advocating for a new paradigm approach to peaceful social change in Africa. “APC no longer operates within the framework of traditional NGOs that have managed countless projects in the Sahel region under the Washington Consensus,” he stated.

“Under transitional influence, the Sahelian state has moved from post-colonial status to the neoliberal order with little regard for the global and community,” he added.

“With its hypocrisy, the international coalition has forged, in the shadow of the Washington Consensus, public policies in place of local administration and population,” El Abbouch elaborated, exposing the systemic issues with traditional approaches.

The organization takes a critical stance toward the traditional transitional NGO model. “The international society of NGOs, benefiting from considerable funding from the International Crisis Group, shapes the dominant bureaucracy of peace,” El Abbouch noted.

He criticized that their analyses “ignore the past of wars and only recommend neoliberal peace solutions,” contending “only viewpoints of pseudo-experts who completely disregard the vision and values of communities and citizens victims of territorial battles.”

From colonial legacy to contemporary conflicts

El Abbouch drew attention to significant historical events that have shaped the region’s current dynamics. He invoked the 1968 military coup that overthrew Mali’s first president, Modibo Keita, and the subsequent period of political upheaval.

“The African Charter of Human Rights, adopted in 1981, after long years of discussion, was never used to lay the blame to the repression of Moussa Traoré’s junta against the colonial civil region of Modibo Keita,” he remarked.

“The USHR, despite Modibo Keita’s election, wanted to maintain its position in Mali to the army and continued to provide military equipment,” El Abbouch responded, adding that Soviet forces included “widespread treatment and detention of their Malian allies imprisoned in appalling conditions in northern Mali, in the Tazoua zone.”

“France led the West position framework, leaving the African states of the Sahel Alliance, an defender of human rights, particularly involving the regional organization of ECOWAS,” El Abbouch asserted to MWN.

However, he also pointed out that regional mechanisms have not always effectively addressed human rights concerns.

“The G5 Sahel initiative by France has contained itself with a global war on terrorism that ends in terrible failure,” El Abbouch observed, referencing regional development.

Challenging R2P: A new approach to peace

The partnership presents an alternative to the United Nations’ Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. APC, building on AFD’s strategy and expertise, does not seek to replace the United Nations where R2P was developed,” El Abbouch clarified.

He explained that the R2P doctrine, “using the liability in Mali, ECRG, Iraq, or Palestine, of legitimacy and multilateral force, limits the international community’s role by protecting the most vulnerable during civil wars.”

“Identifying powdered mills, funding IMF bailouts, transferring public school money to UNICEF to put displaced children under care — this international aid that poses contrary to indigenous development and does not lead to peace,” El Abbouch stated.

He also highlighted the contemporary internationalization of war: “We must also reflect on the contemporary internationalization of war: in the Sahel, but also in Syria. The R2P does not take this dimension into account. Instead, it chooses to count, each month, the number of displaced or marginalized people to constantly inflate the UN budget and its activities.”

El Abbouch pointed to specific challenges in the Sahel region. “The sticking points are not identical across countries and regions. The struggles in Mali, had two specific obstacles linked to the terrible history of this part of the country: one is a general safety by violent power.”

He added that “The forcing of Niger into late conflicts with the central state but without the same structural handicaps encountered in Mali.”

Building a transnational peace architecture

The collaboration between APC and AFD aims to establish what El Abbouch called a “transnational peace initiative-building structure, Kenya and Africa.”

He added that APC has “engaged on the central question of peace in consultation with the Institute for Peace of the U.S. Congress, the world’s most important country born and grown from an established civil war.”

Speaking about the American partnership, El Abbouch noted the significance of working with the United States: “Whether it’s the evictions of Native Americans, the slave trade, the Civil War, civil rights, etc. — American creation and preservation are never that peace is a multiform, multipartisan, popular and civic battle.”

“More than objectives, we should talk about methodology,” El Abbouch stressed. He detailed APC’s approach using “data-driven tools: knowledge, dialogue, exchange, and especially recognition of protagonists without exclusion.”

The partnership’s concrete strategy focuses on investing in local communities. As El Abbouch explained, the goal is to “invest in people and institutions of a territory to strengthen their skills and capabilities, their autonomy, and enable them to fully participate in the development process of peace beyond aid to society.”

Looking ahead, APC plans to establish its headquarters in Morocco, structuring its partnership with AFD to build an exchange network for peace. “Morocco has undertaken its second peace a complete for Morocco action to help and engage the Central Sahelian states in forming a space of peace and prosperity,” El Abbouch revealed.

“APC can, with Moroccan civil society and that of the Sahel Alliance states, support, complement, and deepen local exchange and the expression of peace citizenship rather than their disambiguation,” he continued.

A recently released APC press release outlines the challenges the coalition faces, stating that “most open with numerous African situations where local citizens on the state and public of citizens participation would be part of the solution to conflicts, wars and suffering induced by populations.”

In this context, the initiative aims to contribute to local policy formulation across multiple domains, including employment, youth affairs, education, health, delinquency prevention, housing, and poverty reduction.

APC, recognized as a “prominent influencer and change agent” among global peace-building institutions, brings significant resources to this partnership through its annual Francophone conference and extensive network of stakeholders.

“Concretely, we don’t provide to carry bags of rice to Malians,” El Abbouch concluded. “Humbly and locally, we act, with our Malians, Comorians, Nigerians, Moroccans, French, and Spanish friends, reveal and restore Mali’s history. Knowing it is part of the elements that allow understanding the past and generating its impact to the present.”

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