



Media and Research Services



Insights on Peace & Security Council

The situation in Somalia

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Tomorrow (7 November) the Peace and Security Council (PSC) will hold its 806th session, the first session of the month under the chairpersonship of Djibouti, dedicated to the situation in Somalia. During the session the PSC is expected to receive the report of the African Union (AU) Commission (AUC) Chairperson on the situation in Somalia. The AU Peace and Security Department and the Special Representative of the AUC Chairperson to Somalia and head of the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Madeira, are expected to make statement and introduce the report of the chairperson.

During the introductory part of the session, following the practice of the PSC the Inter- Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), particularly Ethiopia as the Chair of IGAD and African Member of the UN Security Council (A3), the UN office to the AU (UNOAU) and the European Union (EU) will also make their statements at the session are expected to make a statement.

The report, which covers the period from August to November 2018, provides updates on the major political and security developments in Somalia and issues pertaining to AMISOM. In the political front, the report presents developments relating to the implementation of the Somali Transitional Plan (STP), including agreement on the political roadmap for 2020, the constitutional review process, the federal system and the legislative and institutional preparations for the 2021 general election.

For PSC members, it would be of interest to inquire on challenges pertaining to the implementation of the required measures in these various areas, including significant number of key legislations, within the timelines set and on how AMISOM meaningfully contribute for achieving the timelines.

In the political front, the major issue of concern for Somalia, highlighted in the report, is the deterioration in the relationship between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS). As the Chairperson's report notes, the major developments in this regard include the communiqué of the FMS meeting of 8 September in Kismayo announcing severance of relationship with the FGS and the refusal of the FMS to attend the emergency meeting that President Mohamed Farmaajo called for 17 and 18 September 2018. During a meeting held in Garowe, Puntland, the FMS have established security arrangements, which, according to the Chairperson's report, not only represent a departure from the STP but also duplicate the role of the National Security Council (NSC).

Despite efforts for bridging the difference through intervention by the Federal Parliament and a ministerial committee, not only that the efforts failed to achieve breakthrough but the division is further deepening. While he was attending a peace event in Juba, South Sudan last week, President Farmaajo criticized the FMS. Highlighting their failure to provide basic services to their residents, he rejected their demand for more political mandate and called their engagement in foreign policy, a sphere exclusive to the federal government, unacceptable. In this context, it is worth noting that the political crisis in Somalia is in part a result of the entanglement of Somalia in the Gulf crisis. Indeed, Somalia has become the country most affected by the exportation into the Horn of Africa of the destabilizing rivalry between Middle Eastern countries and among the Gulf states.

There are increasing concerns that the rising tension between the FGS and the FMS would adversely affect not only the political reconciliation efforts in Somalia but also the elections that the FMS are expected to have in the coming months. Indeed, there are signs that the elections planned for November 17 in South West could be derailed. On 4 November, the Upper House of Parliament issued a statement warning against

‘interference’ into the regional elections starting with Southwest election on Nov 17.

On 5 November 2018, the Southwest Electoral Commission resigns citing interference by the federal government into the region’s election process scheduled for 17 November. Additionally, the participation of Mukhtar Robow, former number two of Al-Shabaab, who recently got his eligibility certificate for the candidacy of the election in the Southwest region scheduled in 17 November is another major development. Robow’s candidacy have reignited debates on the issue of impunity, justice and political role of former Al-Shabaab.

Recognizing the risk that this situation poses, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Nicolas Haysom and the Madeira have initiated mediation efforts. The duo undertook a visit to the South West State of Somalia. As Haysom noted following the visit, ‘the stand-off between the Federal Member States and the Federal Government may well paralyze ...efforts to help Somalia get back on its feet.’

It would be of interest for PSC member states to hear from Madeira on his impressions of the tense stand-off between the FGS including in relation to the planned elections in Southwest and the FMS and what the PSC can do, including within the framework of its planned field visit to Somalia during the course of the month, towards supporting the efforts of the Haysom and Madeira for resolving the dispute.

In terms of the security situation, the Chairperson’s report rightly notes that the security situation in Somalia is volatile and unpredictable. Apart from continuing to maintain its presence in parts of South and central Somalia, Al Shabaab, which according to the Chairperson’s report is estimated strength of 5000 to 7000 fighters, continues to orchestrate attacks in various parts of the country, notably including in Mogadishu.

A spike in violence in many parts of the country is resulting in rise in internal displacement without basic

needs and assistance, forcing thousands to live without enough food, shelter, clean water and sanitation, and exposed to disease outbreaks. According to the UNHCR Protection and Returns Monitoring Network, in October 2018 alone more than 21,000 people were displaced due to the violence and insecurity. Most of these displacements took place in the Lower Shabelle and Hiran, regions. The spike is adding pressure to the effort to respond to the 2.6 million already internally displaced Somalis.

The Chairperson’s report also raises concern on the presence of violent armed groups in Puntland. This includes the alleged presence of an estimated 150-180 pro-Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) fighters in the Qandala Mountains in Puntland and the local Puntland Al-Shabaab group assessed to be around 600 fighters.

For members of the PSC it would be of interest to inquire on the factors enabling Al Shabaab to sustain itself and increase its threats and the implications of the same on the effective implementation of the STP and the

As far as AMISOM is concerned, the Chairperson’s report highlights the revised Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and the reconfiguration of AMISOM. Apart from the rearrangement of the role of AMISOM military, it envisaged enhanced roles of the police and civilian components. One of the major expected changes as far as the military component is concerned is the plan to establish quick reaction forces at sector’s levels. In terms of the scaling down of the size of AMISOM as part of the exit strategy, further withdrawal of 1000 personnel is anticipated to reduce the force strength of AMISOM from of 20,586 in October 2018 to 19,586 by February 2019. The report also envisages the move towards achieving full multinational composition of sector headquarters.

As the Chairperson’s report notes, the effective implementation of the various measures linked to the

exit strategy of AMISOM depends on the progress that FGS makes in various areas. In this respect it in particular noted that more accountability is also needed from the FGS in terms of its relationship with the FMS, implementation of the NSA, including integration of regional forces as well as finalization of the constitutional review and national electoral processes.

For PSC members, AMISOM's funding gaps and options will also be of major interest. In their respect, member states may inquire the outcome of the numerous trips and consultations held with the conventional donors of the AMISOM, to make the funding for the mission and transition predictable and sustainable.

The expected outcome is a Communique. The communiqué may address the issues highlighted both in the peace and security situation of Somalia and in the developments relating to AMISOM.



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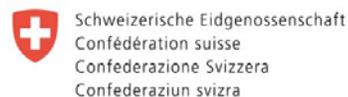
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amani Africa wishes to express its gratitude to the embassy of Switzerland and the embassy of Germany in Addis Ababa.



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