MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

March, 2025

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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In March, under the chairship of Morocco, as the stand-in chair on behalf of The Gambia, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) had a scheduled programme of work consisting of six sessions, covering seven agenda items, an informal session and induction of members of the PSC.

Out of the six substantive sessions, only one session was focused on a country-specific issue. However, over the course of the month, the PSC issued two Press Statements on the Situations in Sudan and South Sudan - on 11 and 31 March, respectively. Except for one session held at the ministerial level, all the other sessions, including the informal consultation, were held at the ambassadorial level.

The programme of work underwent two revisions. The first revision introduced several new sessions, including the session on 'Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa' scheduled for 6 March; a session on 'Deradicalization as a Leverage in the Fight Against Violent Extremism in Africa' on 14 March; a 'Briefing on the Matrix Relating to the Situation in Eastern DRC' on 17 March; and a ministerial level session on 'Artificial Intelligence and its Impact on Peace, Security, and Governance in Africa' set for 20 March. In addition to these additions, the revision also entailed changes to previously scheduled sessions. The session on the 'Situation in South Sudan,' originally set for 6 March, was moved to 18 March. The session on 'Women, Peace, and Security' was rescheduled from 18 to 17 March, while the Informal Consultations with Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Sudan were brought forward from 19 to 18 March.

The second revision introduced further changes to the programme of work. A new session on the 'Review of the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture' was added for 19 March,[1] but did not take place. The session scheduled for 17 March on the 'Briefing on the Matrix Relating to the Situation in Eastern DRC' was removed. This revision also included changes in the scheduling of several sessions. The session on 'Women, Peace, and Security in Africa,' which was rescheduled to 17 March in the first revision, was moved again to 21 March. Similarly, the session on 'Deradicalisation as a Leverage for the Fight Against Violent Extremism in Africa,' initially set for 14 March, was shifted to 19 March.

Additionally, the initial programme indicated that from 22 to 24 March, the CoE will have the induction of the newly elected members of the PSC. However, this was later made to be a workshop to devise innovative strategies for enhancing the implementation of PSC decisions and strengthening peace and security across Africa.

Apart from the two press statements, the outcomes of the other substantive sessions were adopted as communiqués. With a total of six communiqués. A press release was also issued following the conclusion of the induction of the new PSC members. On average, it took seven days for the published outcome documents to be released.

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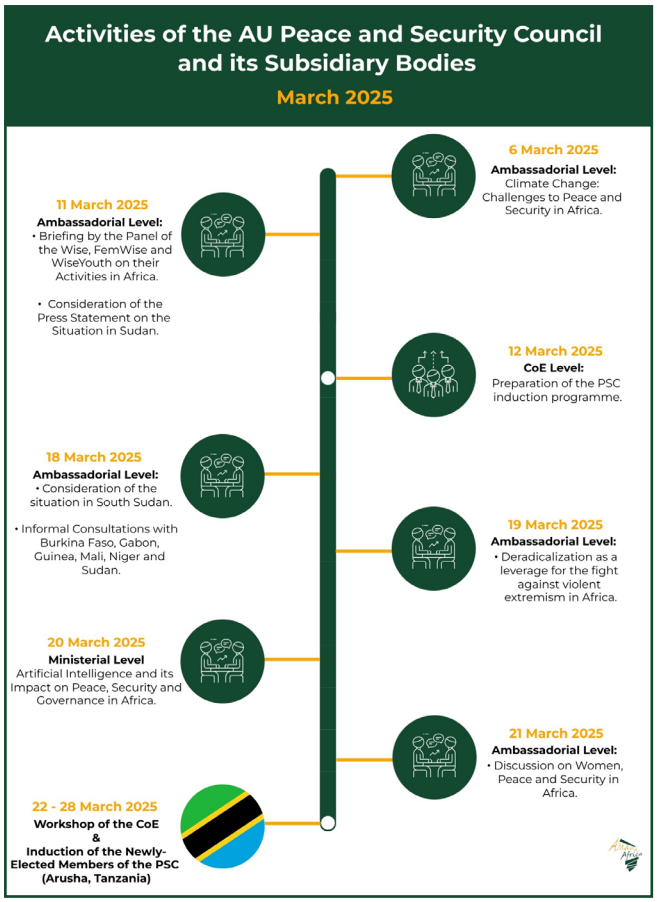
1 The initially adopted Provisional Programme of Work had scheduled a meeting of the Committee of Experts (CoE) for 13 March, with two agenda items: the 2025 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture – Draft African Position/Negotiation Paper and preparations for the PSC Induction Programme. However, in the second revision of the programme, the agenda item on the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review was removed, and the discussion on the preparation of the PSC Induction Programme was rescheduled to 12 March.



PSC EMPHASISED DUE PROCESS AND CONSIDERATION OF THE INPUTS OF AU MEMBER STATES AS IT TASKS THE AU COMMISSION TO EXPEDITE THE FINALISATION OF THE STUDY ON THE CLIMATE-CONFLICT NEXUS

On 6 March, the first PSC meeting of the month deliberated on the theme 'Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa.' Coming in as Council's 1263rd meeting,[2] the session generally underscored the urgent need to integrate climate change considerations into peace and security frameworks, mobilise resources, foster cooperation, and build African-led solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the continent's stability and development.

In terms of mainstreaming, the intervention of speakers and member states emphasised the need for incorporating 'environmental and climate dimensions, including agricultural adaptation, into strategies aimed at promoting peace, security and development.' Reference was also made to integrating climate-conflict indicators in early warning systems.

Figure 1: PSC's 1263rd meeting.
(Source: X @AUC_PAPS)

From the communiqué of this session, the PSC requested the AU Commission to 'support and strengthen its collaboration with initiatives aimed at strengthening African capacities to anticipate, prevent and effectively manage the challenges of climate change, notably the African Agriculture Adaptation (AAA) Initiative, the African Security, Stability and Sustainability (SSS) initiative and the three Climate Commissions, namely the Sahel Commission, the Island States Commission and the Congo Basin Commission, in coordination with centers of excellence such as Africa Center of Excellence for resilience and Adaptation, Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)

2 *Briefers of the meeting included Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, former AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment; Representative of Kenya, as AU Champion for Climate Change; Parfait Onanga Anyanga, Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General to the AU; Representative of Climate Change Competence Centre (4C Morocco), and Representative of Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture (AAA Initiative).*

and Climate responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP), [alongside] the collaboration of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).' In clear recognition of the responsibility that member states bear for ensuring preparedness and prevention, it called on '**Member States to improve communication on climate change phenomena such as drought, cyclones and floods to effectively ensure disaster preparedness and risk reduction at local, national, regional and continental levels.**'

Relatedly, Council encouraged South-South cooperation and strategic partnerships, improve communication on climate change phenomena, as well as the dissemination of digital adaptation tools, such as the African Agriculture Adaptation Tracking Tool, 'to provide decision-makers with accurate, up-to-date data to guide their policies on the subject' in the spirit of disaster preparedness, risk reduction and sharing best practices as well as technological innovations for collective and effective adaptation.

Regarding funding, the session highlighted the need to mobilise adequate and sustainable financing to close the adaptation financing gap, finance loss and damage, 'ensure a just transition, reach the most vulnerable contexts, strengthen African financing facilities, and upscale climate-security actions in the continent.' While highlighting its inadequacy and the need for mobilising $1.3 trillion by 2030, the PSC also acknowledged 'the adoption by the COP 29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan, of the new climate finance target of USD 300 billion annually by 2035.' The PSC also welcomed the 'operationalisation of carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement aimed at strengthening the capacity to achieve low carbon, climate-resilient development through implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (APs).' Beyond the gap between the financing need and the funding commitment, it is to be recalled that follow-up on past commitments was dismal. Accordingly, the PSC put emphasis on 'swift implementation of these decisions' on financing adopted in Baku. While no reference was made to it, financing shortfalls are set to grow in the face of major shifts in global development finance policies including the scaling back of support by European funders and the slashing of 90% of foreign aid by the US as noted in the edition of Insights on the PSC produced for informing this session.

This session gave particular attention to the adaptation of agriculture on the continent. In this respect, the Council encouraged 'investments dedicated to the implementation of relevant African initiatives for the adaptation of African agriculture, as well as projects aimed at the sustainability of natural resources.' Reference was also made on the need for incorporating adaption of agriculture into peace and security and development strategies.

In requesting the AU Commission to expedite the finalisation of the study on climate, peace and security nexus, the PSC expressed that the common position 'defines the varying security impacts of climate change on the African continent.' It also emphasised that the finalisation has to be undertaken 'following due process, and taking into consideration the contributions from all AU Member States, the African Group of Negotiators, and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs).'

Relevant Previous PSC Decisions:

- 1184th session, 7 November 2023 - PSC requested the AU Commission to ex-peditiously finalise and consolidate the African Continental Climate Se-

curity Risk Assessment Report on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus, and the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in Africa.

- 1114th Session, 18 October 2022 - PSC reiterated the request for the AU Commission to expedite the finalisation of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security in the Continent.
- 1079th session, 21 April 2022 - PSC requested the AU Commission to expedite the finalisation of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Study on the nexus between Climate Change, Peace and Security.
- 1051st Session, 26 November 2021 - PSC requested the AU Commission to expedite the finalisation of a climate-related security risks assessment study, in consultation with Member States.
- 984th session, 9 March 2021 - PSC expressed its anticipation of receiving the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the Continent.
- 774th session, 21 May 2018 - PSC requested the AU Commission to undertake a study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the continent.

Relevant Previous Assembly Decisions:

- [Assembly/AU/Dec.868(XXXVII)] of the 37th Ordinary Session - AUC was tasked to initiate the due process for the establishment of the African Climate Change Fund, in accordance with the decision of the 984th meeting of the PSC, held at the level of Heads of State and Government, on 9 March 2021.
- [Assembly/AU/Dec. 815(XXXV)] of the 35th Ordinary Session - The Assembly of Heads of State and Government requested the expedited finalisation of the climate-related security risk assessment study, in consultation with Member States, as well as to expeditiously develop a Common African Position on the nexus between Climate, Peace and Security.

PSC missed the opportunity to lay the ground for pushing for AU's Role in global forums (G20 and COP30). There's growing emphasis on the AU advocating for Africa's climate-security needs at the 2025 G20 Summit in South Africa and COP30 in Brazil. It is worth noting that the AU aims to leverage the CAP to secure climate finance and resilience projects, but some member states remain sceptical, viewing it as overly ambitious or disconnected from domestic priorities. The communiqué mentions COP29 outcomes but not the strategic focus on these upcoming global events or internal debates about the CAP's relevance.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At its 1263rd session, the PSC requested the AU Commission:

- To expedite the finalisation of the study on the climate-conflict nexus;
- Finalisation of the Common African Position on Climate Change, Peace and Security;
- To support and strengthen its collaboration with initiatives aimed at strengthening African capacities to anticipate, prevent and effectively manage the challenges of climate change, notably the African Agriculture Adaptation (AAA) Initiative, the African Security, Stability and Sustainability (SSS) initiative and the three Climate Commissions; and
- In collaboration with partners to mobilise the necessary funds aimed at

building continental capacity to anticipate, prevent and manage the challenges of climate change with a focus on adaptation projects across the continent.

PSC CALLED FOR REINFORCEMENT OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE'S PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY ROLE IN SOUTH SUDAN

On 11 March, the PSC held its 1264th session to receive a briefing on the activities of the Panel of the Wise and its subsidiary mechanisms - Femwise and WiseYouth. Emphasising the Panel's strategic role in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding, the session highlighted the urgent need for the AU Commission to reinforce the Panel's operations, particularly in South Sudan, where escalating tensions threaten to derail the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The PSC requested the AU Commission to allocate resources to bolster the Panel's engagement in South Sudan, including strengthening the AU's on-ground presence, while encouraging the Panel to engage the Tumaini Initiative for ensuring alignment with the R-ARCSS and prevent fragmentation of peace efforts.

The Council also welcomed the inaugural joint retreat between the Panel of the Wise and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Committee of Elders in November 2024, which focused on enhancing preventive diplomacy and cross-border conflict resolution in Central Africa. While this marks a positive step toward collaboration with regional bodies, the PSC stressed the need to institutionalise AU-ECCAS coordination mechanisms, including shared early warning systems and peace initiatives.

Similarly, the operationalisation of the WiseYouth Network in October 2024 and the deployment of FemWise-Africa members in mediation missions were acknowledged as progress in integrating youth and gender perspectives into peace processes. The council thus called for enhanced technical and financial support and capacity-building efforts to strengthen the FemWise and WiseYouth networks.

Figure 2: 1264th PSC Meeting on the Activities of the Panel of the Wise (Source: X @AUC_PAPS)

The PSC noted 'the trend of emerging conflicts on the continent and the need for enhancing the rapid deployment of the Panel.' Against this background, it directed the AU Commission to strengthen 'the provision of early warning analysis to the Panel and conduct joint scenario building through collaboration with the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace), aiming to enable rapid deployment of the Panel to emerging conflicts.'

The communiqué reflected broad endorsements of the Panel's trajectory, and reaffirmed strong political support for the Panel's preventive diplomacy mandate and called for greater operational resourcing and structured coordination with regional bodies.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At its 1264th session, the PSC requested the AU Commission:

- To reinforce the Panel's work in South Sudan by allocating necessary resources and strengthening the AU's presence on the ground to provide continuous engagement with national and regional stakeholders;
- To allocate adequate resources to support the implementation of key outcomes from the AU-ECCAS joint retreat;
- To strengthen the provision of frequent early warning analysis to the Panel of the Wise and to conduct joint scenario building with experts, including those from the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace); and
- To avail resources to enable the Panel of the Wise and its subsidiary Mechanisms to timely support the activities of the Peace and Security Council on conflict prevention, through mediation and dialogue in Africa.

PSC STRONGLY CONDEMNS RSF'S MOVE TO ESTABLISH A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

On the same day, 11 March, the PSC considered a second agenda item to address the situation in Sudan. This item was not initially envisaged in the Council's Programme of Work for the month. The inclusion of the item was prompted by a major development: the announcement of the establishment of a parallel government by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and affiliated armed and political groups, including the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), who signed a transitional charter in Nairobi on 4 March.

It appears that no extensive deliberation took place on the matter; rather, a draft press statement was read to the Council by the PSC Secretariat for adoption. The press statement, issued as the outcome document of the session, was unusually forceful in tone compared to statements released by other actors, including the UN Security Council and the European Union. The strong wording of the statement does not come as a complete surprise, given the opposition of most AU member states to the fragmentation of any country and the sensitivity of the Chairperson of the month to threats to the territorial integrity of states.

In the statement, the PSC expressed 'grave concern' and an 'outright condemnation' of the RSF's announcement of a parallel government, warning that such a move could lead to the country's fragmentation. Reaffirming its commitment to Sudan's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, the Council categorically rejected the purported parallel government or entity.

The Council urged all AU Member States and the international community not only to refrain from recognising any parallel government or entity seeking to partition or govern any part of Sudan but also to withhold any form of support or assistance to armed or political groups attempting to establish such an entity. Meanwhile, the PSC called on all warring parties to agree to a ceasefire, ensure unhindered humanitarian access during the holy month of Ramadan, and commit to comprehensive and inclusive peace talks to end the conflict.

It is worth noting that the UN Security Council also expressed grave concern over the signing of a charter to establish a parallel government, warning that such actions risk deepening the conflict, fragmenting the country and worsening an already dire humanitarian situation. Similarly, on 11

March, the European Union spokesperson issued a statement cautioning that the RSF's plans for a parallel government threaten Sudan's territorial integrity and undermine the Sudanese people's democratic aspirations for an inclusive, Sudanese-led process toward the restoration of civilian rule. Countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United States have also rejected the RSF's move to establish a parallel government.

EXPRESSING DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE FIGHTING THAT ERUPTED IN SOUTH SUDAN, PSC CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE END TO HOSTILITIES

On 18 March, the PSC held its 1265th session, dedicated to the situation in South Sudan.[3] The session was held amid the escalation of tensions in the country following the 4 March clash between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the White Army, a Nuer militia loosely linked with First Vice-President Riek Machar, in Nasir County, Upper Nile State. The incident led to the death of SSPDF Commander General Majur Duk, several others, including a UN crew.

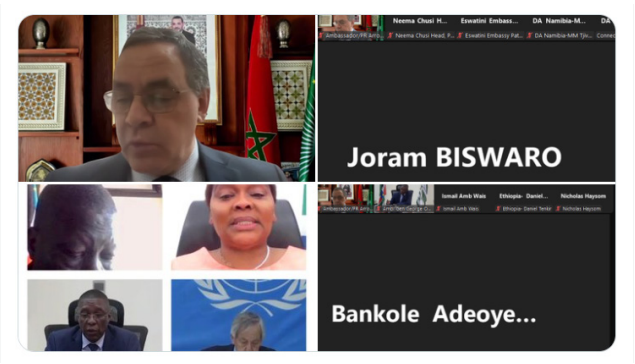


Figure 3: 1265th PSC Meeting on the situation in South Sudan (Source: X @AUC_PAPS)

In its communiqué, the PSC expressed 'deep concern' over the escalating tension and its threat to the peace process. Speakers at the session highlighted the gravity of the situation, with Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), Ambassador Major General (rtd) George Aggrey Owinow, characterised it as the 'most serious challenge' to the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) since its signing in September 2018. Similarly, Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) of the UN for South Sudan and Head of UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), warned of the country's precarious position on the brink of relapsing into civil war.

'We are here today because, as partners in peace, we are concerned that South Sudan is poised on the brink of relapse into civil war, which threatens to erase the hard-won peace gains since the signing of the Revitalised Agreement in 2018. It requires our immediate and collective intervention to ensure that war is averted.'

Remarks of the SRSG and Head of UNMISS, Nicholas Haysom, to the PSC's 1265th session, 18 March 2025

3 Ambassador Professor Joram Mukama Biswaro, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for South Sudan and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Juba; the representative of South Africa as Chairperson of the AU Ad-Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5); Dr. Ismail Wais, IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan; Ambassador Major General (rtd) George Aggrey Owinow, Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC); and Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS, were among the speakers during the session.

'The current situation in the Republic of South Sudan is deeply concerning, and the Revitalised Peace Agreement is facing the most serious challenges since its signing in September 2018.'

Statement from the Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), Ambassador Major General (rtd) George Aggrey Owinow during the PSC's 1265th session, 18 March 2025

During the session, the PSC appealed for calm and restraint, urging an immediate cessation of hostilities and adherence to the ceasefire agreement. It also encouraged all signatory parties to the Revitalised Agreement to uphold their obligations and desist from undermining peace. While the session encouraged the parties to redouble efforts in building mutual trust and confidence to de-escalate tensions, it did not address the arrest of senior SPLM/A-IO military and government officials - a development that has further deepened mistrust between President Salva Kiir and his Vice President, Riek Machar. Reports indicate that since February, more than 20 SPLM/A-IO political and military officials have been arrested, while many others have gone into hiding or fled the country. Unlike the PSC, IGAD summit urged 'the immediate release of detained officials.'

The key outcome of this session, particularly in addressing the escalating tensions in South Sudan, is the PSC's request for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to deploy a High-Level delegation to engage the parties on the ground. At the same time, ensuring effective coordination with other mediation efforts remains crucial to avoid a situation akin to the one in Sudan, where multiple parallel peace efforts from different actors complicated coordinated action and messaging. This is particularly pertinent as IGAD, at its 43rd extraordinary summit on 12 March, has already taken steps to establish a Ministerial Sub-Committee on South Sudan, tasked with overseeing efforts to restore calm and advance the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement. Subsequent to the session, Kenya also dispatched Raila Odinga as a special envoy to South Sudan to ease the rising tensions.

Meanwhile, the engagement of the AU Ad-Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5) appears to be limited to facilitating material and financial support for the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU). Notably, the Council requested the C5 to assist in airlifting military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to South Sudan to support the training and deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUFs).

Another key issue addressed in the session is the Tumaini Initiative, a high-level mediation process between representatives of South Sudan's RTGoNU and holdout groups that did not sign the Revitalised Agreement. Launched in May 2024 under the auspices of the Kenyan government, the initiative has encountered setbacks in recent months due to disagreements over its alignment with the Revitalised Agreement.[4]

4 The initiative encountered challenges when the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO), as part of the South Sudan Government delegation, withdrew from the talks protesting that the Tumaini process was exceeding its Terms of Reference, attempting to replace the R-ARCSS with a new agreement rather than complementing it. On the other hand, groups such as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Real (SPLM-R), led by Pagan Amum Okech, argued that Tumaini should take precedence over the Revitalised Agreement, as it seeks

The Council urged the parties to resolve their differences and emphasised the need to harmonise the process with the R-ARCSS. With rising tensions among parties to the Revitalised Agreement and the fragility of the coalition under the Transitional Government of National Unity, the ability of the Tumaini Initiative to bring holdout groups into the peace process remains uncertain.

Without having regard to the implications of the eruption of fighting and the breakdown of relationship between the leaders of the two major signatories of the Revitalised Agreement, the remaining parts of the communiqué largely reiterate previous pronouncements on the implementation of pending provisions of the Revitalised Agreement, particularly those related to constitution-making, electoral processes and the deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUFs). In this regard, the Council urged the RTGoNU, among other things, to accelerate the deployment of the NUFs, which are critical to South Sudan's peace and stability; expedite the DDR/SSR programmes; establish the Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and its governing Board (BSRF); develop guidelines for the establishment of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan in collaboration with the AU Commission; and mobilise resources for the three constitution-making and electoral bodies—the National Elections Commission (NEC), the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) and the Political Parties Council (PPC).

With the parties to the Revitalised Agreement extending the elections from December 2024 to the end of 2026, the Council called for the AU Commission to include support towards the electoral process in South Sudan among the priority projects, including through the use of the AU Peace Fund. Importantly, the Council urged the RTGoNU to draw up a clear and well-defined electoral timetable. It also encouraged the Trilateral Mechanism (AU-IGAD-UN) to work closely with the RTGoNU to reactivate the Government-Trilateral Joint Task Force and facilitate the implementation of pending R-ARCSS provisions related to constitution-making and electoral processes.

to address unresolved issues. It is against this backdrop that the Council emphasised the need to align the Tumaini Initiative with the R-ARCSS.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At its 1265th session, the PSC requested:

- The AU Commission Chairperson to deploy a High-Level delegation in South Sudan to engage the parties on the ground to address the current conflict and to expeditiously address the institutional capacity challenges facing the AU Mission in South Sudan;
- The C5 to support the airlifting of the military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to South Sudan to aid the training and deployment of the NUFs; and
- The IGAD and AU Chairperson, as well as the UN Secretary-General, to collaborate with the Board of Special Reconstruction Fund (BSRF) towards the convening of the South Sudan pledging Conference to support the implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement.

PSC CONCERNED ABOUT THE ALARMING SURGE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

On 19 March, the PSC held its 1266th session, dedicated to the theme 'Deradicalisation as a Leverage for the Fight against Violent Extremism in Africa.' A communiqué was adopted as the outcome document of the session. Although the meeting presented an opportunity to engage various stakeholders in highlighting best practices on deradicalisation, this was not the case. For instance, unlike the previous session on the same theme held in October 2022, where the Rabita Mohammadia of Ulema—the Moroccan League of Religious Scholars—was among the speakers, the 1266th session lacked such contributions.

Substantively, the communiqué offers little that is new, particularly when compared to the PSC's 1111th session, which marked a notable shift in approach toward engaging terrorist groups. That earlier session emphasised the importance of dialogue and negotiation with terrorist and extremist actors as a means to encourage their voluntary surrender and rehabilitation. It also carried major decisions, such as requesting the AU Commission to develop a compendium of African national reconciliation best practices and incorporating strategies to counter radicalisation and extremist ideologies in the review of the African Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

Relevant previous PSC decisions:

The 1111th session [PSC/MIN/COMM.1111 (2022)] held on 7 October 2022 requested the AU Commission:

- To include countering radicalisation and extremist ideologies in the envisaged review of the African Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism;
- Through the Africa Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), to continue providing technical capacity building support to Member States and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Service of Africa (CISSA) to also continue providing credible early warning, with a view to boosting the preventative capacities of Member States and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs); and
- To develop a compendium of African national reconciliation best practices to be submitted for consideration by PSC, as soon as possible.

In contrast, the communiqué adopted at the 1266th session largely reiterates previous pronouncements without introducing new initiatives or directions.

During this session, the PSC stressed deradicalisation as an effective tool in countering extremist ideologies and hate speech, as well as in preventing terrorism and violent extremism. In this respect, it reiterated the request made at its 1111th session for the incorporation of the fight against radicalisation and extremist ideologies into the AU action plan on the prevention and fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Similarly, as in the 1111th session, the PSC underscored the importance of leveraging best practices and experiences from across African countries through the establishment of platforms, though it again fell short of outlining concrete steps for implementation. The session also stressed the need for regular review of AU's legal framework on counterterrorism to ensure alignment with the current context and international legal framework.

The session recognised the critical role of religious and community leaders in countering extremist ideologies through moderate religious teachings,

interfaith dialogue, the development and dissemination of alternative messaging, and engagement with at-risk youth. Another area of focus was the need to invest in research on the impact of technological advancements on radicalisation and violent extremism in Africa. In this context, the session urged stronger cooperation between Member States and technology companies to detect and remove extremist content from digital platforms, while enhancing cybersecurity measures to monitor and disrupt online terrorist activities.

The importance of effective communication strategies in sensitising the public on the dangers of terrorism and violent extremism was also highlighted. In this regard, the session urged media outlets to promote a culture of peace and tolerance, counter extremist propaganda by amplifying messages of unity and coexistence and complement peace education curricula through responsible journalism on issues related to radicalisation and extremism.

In addition to these, the communiqué outlined several other measures that encompass both hard security and soft approaches to addressing terrorism and violent extremism. These include: enhancing the institutional capacity of security apparatuses; strengthening governance structures and enforcing arms control measures; reinforcing national, regional, and continental frameworks; improving collaboration among key stakeholders at all levels; establishing and strengthening platforms that promote interfaith dialogue, tolerance and peaceful coexistence; enhancing early warning and prevention mechanisms; and strengthening regulatory and legislative frameworks.

PSC OUTLINES A HOLISTIC AGENDA ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE THAT NEEDS TO BUILD ON PREVIOUS PSC PRODUCTS AND OTHER AU INITIATIVES

On 20 March, the PSC held its 1267th session at a ministerial-level dedicated to 'Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its Impact on Peace and Security in Africa.' The outcome of the meeting was adopted as a communiqué.[5]

Figure 4: 1267th Session (Source @AUC_PAPS)

During the session, acknowledging the implementation of one of its previous decisions, the PSC welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Group on AI by the AU Commission and expressed anticipation for the group's contributions in providing strategic guidance. Among the key outcomes of the session was the PSC's proposal to mainstream AI to support inclusive and sustainable development, utilising AI in peacekeeping operations to optimise troop and resource deployment, and developing AI-based early warning

5 *The session opened with statements from Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco and Chairperson of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) for March 2025, and Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the AU Commission. Introductory remarks were also delivered by Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, followed by a statement from Bernardo Mariano Junior, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Information Technology Officer at the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology (UNOICT).*

systems to detect radicalisation, community violence, and emerging conflicts. The PSC also highlighted the importance of a monitoring mechanism, such as an AU Watch Center, to track global and regional AI trends, and highlighted the need to raise awareness about the risks posed by the misuse of AI, particularly military AI, by non-state actors. However, the potential of AI to support preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts, through tools like conflict mapping or sentiment analysis, remains unexplored by the Council.

Regarding governance and regulatory frameworks, the PSC emphasised the need for the development of an African regulatory framework on AI that addresses continent-specific challenges while aligning with international standards. In this context, the PSC reiterated its request to the AU Commission to elaborate an African Common Position on AI, focusing on its impact on peace, security, democracy, and development, and to provide regular updates to the Council on related developments. Additionally, the Commission was tasked with drafting an African Charter on AI to guide its responsible use, including a dedicated section on promoting the peaceful application of AI in support of peace and security in Africa. The PSC further urged AU Member States to sign and ratify the AU Convention on Cyber Security and the Protection of Personal Data. At the national level, it encouraged Member States to adopt relevant legislation for the governance of AI in the context of peace and security, and to develop national strategies that align with the continental framework for AI regulation. It highlighted the importance of involving civil society, researchers, citizens, and the private sector to ensure that AI technologies reflect the continent's specific needs and aspirations.

While the PSC emphasised the need for an African regulatory framework on Artificial Intelligence, a shortcoming in its deliberations was the failure to acknowledge existing analytical and policy initiatives on AI by various AU entities. These include the *Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy and African Digital Compact* adopted by ministers, the AU-NEPAD white paper on AI, and the ongoing study on AI and human rights by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Recognising and building upon these efforts would enable the PSC to better address the intersection of AI with peace, security, and democratic governance. Furthermore, another element that is inadequately reflected in the communiqué is the wide disparities in digital infrastructure, technical capacity, and data governance frameworks among AU Member States.

In addition to overlooking key continental instruments, the communiqué reveals a lack of follow-up on decisions relating to governance and regulatory frameworks. Notably absent are references to the PSC's earlier calls for a comprehensive study on the impact of AI on peace, security, democracy, and development in Africa; the development of frameworks to ensure the ethical and lawful use of AI in military operations; and proposals for continental AI governance, including biannual reporting. Such omissions, in the absence of clear indication of a shift in policy approach, are sure to lead to challenges of follow-up and implementation.

Relevant previous PSC decisions:

- 1097th Session [PSC/PR/COMM.1097.1 (2022)]: PSC requested the AU Commission
  - in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to undertake a comprehensive study on Emerging Technologies and New Media: Impact on Democratic Governance, Peace and Security in

Africa, and the policy options available for harnessing the advantages and for effectively addressing the security threats associated with the use of these technologies and new media in Africa, based on available resources and to report back to the Council; and
- working in collaboration with the RECs/RMs, to effectively harness the advantages of emerging technologies and new media for enhancing the effectiveness of mediation, peacemaking and peace support operations.

- 1214th Session [PSC/PR/COMM.1214 (2024)]: PSC requested the AU Commission
  - to undertake a comprehensive study on the impact and implications of Artificial Intelligence on peace, security, stability, democracy and development in Africa and submit the Report to the PSC as soon as possible;
  - to develop frameworks to oversee the responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence in military operations, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and international humanitarian law; and
  - to propose options for Continental Artificial Intelligence governance, including its military application and to report to Council every six months.

While previous decisions on this subject are still pending, the Council proposed additional measures. It, for example, highlighted 'the imperative to establish an African AI Centre of Excellence for threat assessment and capacity development, and a Pan-African Academy for AI to build African expertise. Member States were encouraged to establish national AI centers and foster partnerships with international organizations, such as UNESCO, while the African Union Commission was tasked with developing training programmes to nurture African talent in AI. The PSC also stresses the importance of regional and international cooperation on cybersecurity, advocating for the transfer of technology and expertise through various collaborative frameworks. To unify efforts, it called for an institutionalized network of national AI centers and an annual conclave to consolidate Africa's position and influence in global AI governance.

To fill in the gap in the development and deployment of AI adapted to African realities, PSC advocated for public-private partnerships and the sharing of best practices among AU Member States and international partners. It further encourages strategic collaborations with global institutions, technology companies, and universities to build local capacity, access cutting-edge technologies, and strengthen Africa's collective voice in global AI discourse. It also stresses the importance of aligning Africa's AI strategies with global initiatives—including the UN Group of Friends on AI, the Summit of the Future, and the Global Digital Compact—to accelerate the realization of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On economic and infrastructure development, the PSC urged Member States to invest in AI across priority sectors, such as cybersecurity, governance, and critical infrastructure resilience. It also called for the establishment of an African Fund for AI to support infrastructure development and startups, while appealing to bilateral and multilateral partners for financial and technical support. However, the recommendation lacks clarity on how this proposed fund would align with existing AU economic and digital strategies, missing an opportunity to ensure coherence, avoid duplication, and enhance the fund's long-term effectiveness.

Lastly, in light of the ongoing global shift toward AI-driven transformation, the PSC

stressed the urgent need for increased African representation in global AI regulatory and governance bodies, emphasizing that inclusive participation is essential to ensure the AI revolution serves all nations equitably and does not further entrench technological and socio-economic disparities.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At its 1267th session, the PSC requested:

- AU Commission to develop and integrated AI-based early warning systems to support the decision making and efforts of the AU Member States, AU and RECs/RMs in detecting signals of radicalisation, community violence and emerging conflicts;
- to elaborate the African Common Position on AI and its impact on peace, security, democracy and development in Africa, and to update the Council regularly on the developments in field;
- AU Commission to develop an African Charter on AI for the responsible use of AI, with a section dedicated to the promotion of peaceful use of AI towards promotion of peace and security in Africa;
- to set up a mechanism to monitor and assess the impact of AI on peace and security, such as an AU Watch Centre;
- to organise an African forum bringing together relevant partners and stakeholders to discuss AI as a key tool suited to share best practices and strategies for peace, security and governance in Africa;
- An African Fund on AI; and
- AU Commission to develop training programmes on AI in support of AU Member States in investing in human capital by training and capturing African talents in the fields of AI.

PSC REVIEWS WPS AGENDA AMID ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

On 21 March, the PSC held its 1268th session dedicated to 'Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in Africa.' Coming fifteen years after the PSC institutionalised annual sessions on this theme through its landmark 223rd meeting in March 2010, the meeting provided a timely opportunity to reflect on the progress achieved and address persistent implementation gaps.

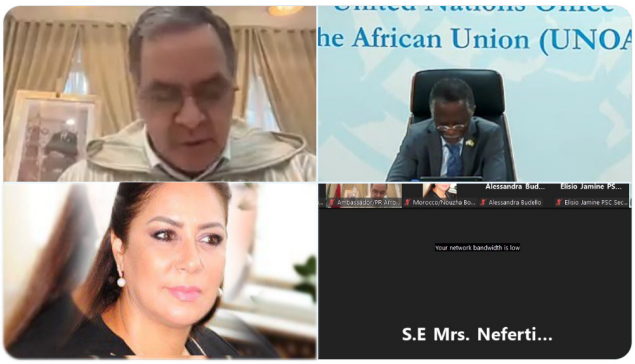


Figure 5: Some participants of the 1268th session (Source: X @AUC_PAPS)

While the institutional architecture for advancing the WPS agenda has expanded over the past decade and a half, implementation remains uneven. The session placed strong emphasis on bridging this gap, stressing that the continued vulnerability of women in conflict settings and their underrepresentation in peace processes are stark reminders of the need to move beyond commitments toward sustained and accountable action. In this respect, Council members commended the annual WPS implementation reports produced by the AU Commission using the Continental Results Framework (CRF) and encouraged Member States to accelerate the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs) to ensure country-level operationalisation of the agenda. However, as underscored in Amani Africa's pre-session edition of 'Insights on the PSC' dedicated to the

session, the success of the CRF could benefit from the inclusion of periodic assessments by the Special Envoy on WPS within the strategic plan instead of exclusive reliance on member states' reports.

In the adopted communiqué, the Council reiterated its strong condemnation of all forms of violence against women and girls in conflict settings and encouraged member states to 'develop an early warning mechanism for conflict prevention in order to protect women from being affected by conflicts.' Council members also reiterated a zero-tolerance stance on sexual violence and called for accountability of perpetrators of violence against women and girls. Despite these declarations, active conflict zones like eastern DRC, the Sahel, and Sudan continue to witness targeted and widespread conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and the exclusion and underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes. This persistent gap between policy and practice highlighted the need for shifting focus from normative and institutional elaborations and meetings rehashing expression of commitments to implementation and operational actions. This is critical to avoid that the work of the PSC does not end up being detached from the lived realities of those it aims to protect.

While a significant development informing this session was the adoption, by the 38th AU Assembly in February 2025, of the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and it was envisaged that the Council would welcome the Convention and call for the swift ratification and domestication of the Convention by Member States, the adopted communiqué makes no mention of this recent Convention.

Relevant previous PSC decisions:

- 1187th PSC session [PSC/PR/COMM.1187 (2023)]: the PSC emphasised 'the need to adopt financial mechanisms to facilitate meaningful participation of women in peace processes, including capacity programmes to provide the requisite skills in conflict prevention, resolution, and management, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development.'
- The Conclusions of the High Level Ministerial Seminar on WPS in Africa: requested the AUC to develop a 'Policy Framework of Women Quotas in Formal Peace Processes across Africa, which will guide the Continent to meet the statutory minimum of thirty percent (30%) gender quota for women's participation in all conflict prevention and management missions, peace processes and election observation missions led by the AU.'

PSC CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF SOUTH SUDAN'S FIRST VICE PRESIDENT RIEK MACHAR AND REQUESTS AU COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO DISPATCH A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION LED BY THE PANEL OF THE WISE

On 31 March, during its 1270th session, the PSC adopted a press statement on the situation in South Sudan. Although the situation in South Sudan was discussed earlier on 18 March, the adoption of the press statement was due to a major escalation triggered by the formal arrest of First Vice President Riek Machar and his wife, Angelina Teny, who also serves as Minister of Interior, on 26 March in Juba. The press statement was adopted after its circulation under silence procedure, without formal deliberation on the situation. It is to be recalled that the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, also issued a statement on 27 March

expressing concern over reports of Machar's detention.

In the PSC's statement, the Council expressed its grave concern over Machar's arrest and detention. It called for his and his wife's 'immediate' and 'unconditional' release. Importantly, it urged authorities to ensure their safety and health.

This development seems to have been regarded by the PSC as posing a grave threat to the Revitalised Agreement. Accordingly, emphasising the importance of the Revitalised Peace Agreement as the 'most viable and relevant Agreement for sustainable peace, stability, and national reconciliation,' the Council called on all parties to uphold both its spirit and letter, echoing the statement of the chairperson of the Commission. It also urged signatory and non-signatory parties alike to recommit to its full, comprehensive, and unconditional implementation.

Another highlight of the press statement was the Council's request for the AU Commission Chairperson to urgently dispatch a high-level delegation to South Sudan to engage the concerned parties with a view to de-escalating tensions, ensuring a ceasefire, and mediating between the parties to restore dialogue and uphold the sanctity and integrity of the Revitalised Agreement. It is worth recalling that PSC's 1265th session requested the deployment of a high-level delegation but without specifying its composition. The 1270th session addressed this by clarifying that the delegation would be led by the Panel of the Wise.

As a follow-up, AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Youssouf Ali announced on the same day that he was dispatching a high-level delegation from the Panel of the Wise to Juba to help de-escalate tensions and promote dialogue. The Panel visited Juba on 2 April and engaged with President Salva Kiir and other stakeholders. However, there was no indication of a meeting with Riek Machar, despite calls from Machar's party for direct engagement. Sources indicate that the Panel was scheduled to meet with Machar on 4 April but was denied access to him. The continued arrests and the refusal of access to Machar, despite calls and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions and advance the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement, suggest a lack of political will for dialogue. This underscores the urgency for the AU to intensify its mediation efforts and to closely coordinate with IGAD and the UN to avert a relapse into another bloody civil war.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At its 1270th session, the PSC:

- Requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to urgently dispatch a high-level delegation to South Sudan to be led by the Panel of the Wise to engage with the parties concerned with the view to de-escalating the tensions, cease-fire, and to mediate between the parties, to ensure a return to dialogue and to uphold the sanctity and integrity of the Revitalised Agreement; and

- Appealed to the AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee of Five (C5) on South Sudan to continue engaging all actors in the country to support the peace efforts deployed by the AU and IGAD in finding lasting peace and stability in the country.

Figure 6: During the induction of the new elected and returning members of the PSC in Arusha, Tanzania

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC FOR THE MONTH

In addition to the PSC substantive meetings, on 18 March, the PSC held informal consultations with Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Sudan, to receive updates on the political transitions in each of these countries.

The PSC further convened the induction of the newly elected members of the PSC, held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 25 to 27 March 2025, which served as a critical platform for peer learning, honest reflection, and strategic dialogue. The induction brought together new PSC members selected during the 46th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and endorsed by the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, with outgoing members.

The outgoing members, including Ambassador *Abdelhamid Gharbi*, Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the *AU*, Ambassador J*ainaba Jagne, former Gambian* Permanent Representative to the AU, Ambassador *Emilia Ndinelao Mkusa*, former Permanent Representative of Namibia to the AU, and *Ambassador Daniel Owassa*, Permanent Representative of Congo to the AU shared their experiences during the induction. Through the sharing of experiences and diverse perspectives, the sessions offered insights into the operational realities of the PSC.

Prior to the induction, the CoE convened a preparatory meeting on 12 March to finalise arrangements for the PSC induction programme.

It is also worth noting that despite being included in the footnote of the PSC programme of work for March, several scheduled events did not take place. These included the briefing by the Chairpersons of the PSC for January, February and March,

which was set for the end of March to discuss the Council's activities during their respective tenures. Finally, the reception dinner scheduled to be hosted by the March Chairperson on 31 March was not held.

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