

Analytical briefing on the Strategic Planning for Post-ATMIS Somalia

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Tomorrow (03 April), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is scheduled to have a closed session dedicated to analytical briefing on the strategic planning for post-AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) Somalia.

Following opening remarks by the Permanent Representative of The Gambia and PSC Chairperson for April, Jainaba Jagne, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye, is expected to deliver a statement. It is expected that the AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) will provide the briefing to the PSC.

The last time the PSC held a session on Somalia/ATMIS on 8 March in an informal consultation, the focus of the session was on plans and preparations towards a post-ATMIS engagement. This built on the 1173rd session that requested the Commission to 'work out a viable ATMIS exit strategy, which should include proposals on AU's continued engagement with and support to Somalia post 31 December 2024.'

Tomorrow's briefing comes against the backdrop of Somalia's submission of its proposal on the strategic planning for post-ATMIS mission, pursuant to UN Security Council resolution [2710 \(2023\)](#). The resolution requested the Government of Somalia to present a proposal for post-ATMIS security arrangements to the Security Council by 31 March 2024. As a follow-up to this request, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has developed Strategic Planning for Post-ATMIS Proposal, defining the

mandate, scope, size, and composition of the post-ATMIS mission in support of Somali state building priorities. It is also to be recalled that in an informal consultation held on 27 March 2024 upon the request of the Government of Somalia, the PSC was briefed by representative of the Government on Somalia's on the proposal for post-ATMIS security arrangements. After the briefing from Somalia, member states requested that the PAPS Department provides analytical briefing offering insights on the proposal for the post-ATMIS mission.

Tomorrow's analytical briefing draws on the mission that the AU PAPS undertook to Somalia in February and the proposal that the Government of Somalia presented on strategic planning for post-ATMIS. During the meeting of the AU high-level delegation led by Alhadji Sarjoh Bah, PAPS' Director for Conflict Management, and Somalia's authorities at the end of January and early February 2024, Bah [noted](#) that the strength, mandate, posture, composition and the overall architecture that will replace ATMIS will be based on 'a very comprehensive security assessment that focuses on the threats and other variables'. Subsequently, on 13 February, the AU also convened the Core Security Partners Group high-level consultative meeting in Addis Ababa, which brought together key partners, to explore avenues for supporting 'Somali-led and owned security arrangements post-ATMIS'.

According to the document on Strategic Planning for Post-ATMIS that the FGS submitted, the mandate of the post-ATMIS mission will be of limited scope. It specifically envisages that focus of the mission will be 'securing identified strategic population centers, key infrastructures in Mogadishu and the FMS capitals (e.g. airports, sea ports); providing air support to the SSF, and permitting SNAF elements to conduct offensive operations.' Accordingly, one of the request of the FGS proposal is for 'an AU-led, UN-authorized multilateral mission,' which is limited in size, scope and timeframe. The

mission is intended to assist Somalia in stabilizing and securing the country; enabling state building priorities; and ensuring a coherent and orderly transfer of security responsibilities to the Somali authorities and increasingly capable security forces.

With respect to the size of the mission, the document states that the FGS does not expect the size of the mission to exceed 10,000. This is despite stating that 'joint strategic assessment will determine the required size of mission based on capability gaps identified by the FGS.' These personnel are projected to deploy across 14 Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) within four sectors—Sector 1 (Mogadishu City and Banadir Region and Lower Shabelle), Sector 2 (Lower and Middle Juba and Gedo), Sector 3 (Bay and Bakool), and Sector 4 (Middle Shabelle, Hiraan and Galgaduud regions). While no specific timeframe is outlined for the new mission, the Proposal highlights that it should align with the timeframe specified in the Somali Security Development Plan (SSDP), which anticipates achieving sovereign capability for security responsibilities within three to five years.

In considering the proposal from FGS, of interest for PSC members are the composition of the post-ATMIS mission, and whether and how elements of ATMIS would constitute part of this new mission to avoid vacuum that may arise due to complete lack of continuity. In clarifying these issues, as well as how the mission will be organized and how it interfaces with FGS and its security forces, the request Somalia made during the Somalia security conference last December and the lessons from AMISOM and ATMIS provide useful basis. Of not any less significance is the consideration to the contribution that AMISOM and ATMIS troops made and the role that ATMIS troop and police contributing countries will play regarding the post-ATMIS AU-led mission. Somalia's Proposal does not provide details on this issue. It is anticipated that some contingents currently operating in ATMIS

will form the 'Core Nucleus' of the new mission to ensure continuity.

There is recognition that whatever form that the post-ATMIS mission takes is expected not only to build on the progress in the drawdown and exit processes of ATMIS but also the overall peace and security conditions in Somalia and institutional readiness of Somalia Security Forces (SSF). In this respect it is worth recalling that even with respect to phase 3 drawdown of ATMIS, UN Security Council Resolution 2710 urged 'ATMIS and its Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries to work closely with the FGS and Somalia's Federal Member States (FMS) to ensure that the Phase 3 drawdown is gradual and conducted in line with Somalia's strategic needs, including progress with force generation, as well as taking into account the situation in Somalia and the importance of maintaining security and stability.' In the light of this, it is of paramount importance that the determination of the size and composition of the post-ATMIS mission is determined on the basis of the strategic assessment which should provide assessment of the threat that Al Shabaab poses, lessons from phase 3 drawdown expected to lead to the withdrawal of 4000 troops by 30 June 2024, the progress in force generation and in consolidation of national reconciliation and political cohesion between FGS and Federal Member States. The nature of continuing security and institutional challenges that Somalia faces when ATMIS completes exit should not be underestimated. Similarly, the enormity of the responsibility should be fully appreciated.

The other issue worthy of PSC's attention in tomorrow's session is the financing dimension. This is a particularly significant issue considering the funding challenges that ATMIS experienced. During the 19 February UN Security Council briefing on Somalia, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Catriona Laing, alluded to the use of UN assessed contribution within the framework of resolution 2719 (2023) on the financing of the AU-led peace

support operations as one of the potential funding modalities. Indeed, this presents the first test for the practical application of resolution 2719. The proposal from the FGS is 'a UN mandated logistical support to the new mission, and the Somali Security Forces (SSF) in joined (sic) and coordinated operations with the new AU-led mission.' The Strategic Planning for post-ATMIS Proposal emphasizes the imperative of securing reliable and sustainable funding. Two funding modalities are proposed to address this critical issue. The first modality involves accessing the UN assessed contributions within the framework of the [landmark](#) UN Security Council resolution [2719](#) (2023). This resolution determined that AU-led PSOs that are authorized by the Security Council will have access to funding from the UN assessed contributions, on a case-by-case basis. The second modality entails considering other 'complementary options', including voluntary contributions from a broader range of donors with 'multiyear commitments', in line with the principle of burden-sharing among the various stakeholders.

It remains unclear whether there will be a formal outcome document following tomorrow's session. However, while welcoming Somalia's Strategic Planning for post-ATMIS Proposal, PSC may emphasize the need for enhanced engagement between the AU Commission and the FGS, along with other partners to ensure mutual understanding on the key aspects of the proposed mission and to address any outstanding issues. In this respect, the PSC may encourage the AU Commission and Somalia to establish a joint monitoring, assessment, consultation and planning mechanism that will, among others, help clarify critical questions relevant to the development of the concept of operations (CONOPs) for the Post-ATMIS mission. PSC may also specify a timeframe for the next briefing to receive updates on progress made toward the development of the CONOPs for the new mission and preparations for the phase 3 ATMIS troops drawdown.