

Annual Informal Joint Seminar and Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council

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8th informal seminar

Tomorrow (5 October) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) will hold their 8th annual informal joint seminar, ahead of the 17th annual consultative meeting taking place on 6 October.

Ahead of the consultative meeting, consistent with established practice, the PSC initiated the draft joint communique. The PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) and its UNSC counterparts, the Ad hoc working group of the UNSC made up of experts of UNSC members held consultations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 3 and 4 October 2023 to work on the draft joint communique.

8th Annual Informal Joint Seminar

The 8th annual informal seminar is expected to commence with opening statements from the co-chairs of the session, the PSC Chairperson, Daniel Owassa, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo to the AU, and the President of the UNSC, Sérgio França Danese, Permanent Representative of Brazil

to the UN. Introductory remarks will also be given by Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), and Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU).

This year's informal seminar has three agenda items. The first two initially proposed by the PSC and agreed to were financing of AU-led peace support operations (AU-led PSOs) and enhancing cooperation between the AUPSC and the UNSC with a focus on working Methods. On the proposal of the UNSC, a third agenda item, namely youth, peace and security, was added. Of these, the agenda that is expected to receive particular attention including for purposes of the joint communique is the one of financing.

On financing of AU-led PSOs, the speakers from the side of the PSC are Uganda, South Africa, Cameroon and Ghana with the UNSC side being Ghana and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Despite the acknowledgment of 'the adequate, predictable and sustainable financing' of AU-led PSOs through five UNSC Resolutions and eight presidential statements adopted/issued since 2008, the journey towards agreement on and adoption of a resolution authorizing in principle the use of UN assessed contribution has been slow. Since 2022, a new window of opportunity has emerged driven by various factors including changes in the peace and security dynamics in Africa and the dynamics within the UNSC. (see *Amani Africa's [special research report](#)*).

This year has seen several positive developments in this regard, including the adoption of the 'African consensus [paper](#) on predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing for African Union peace and security activities' by the AU Assembly's [36th Ordinary Session](#) and the release of the UN Secretary General's [report](#) on the Implementation of UNSC resolutions 2320(2016) and 2378(2017) on 1 May 2023 as requested by the UNSC in August 2022. Furthermore, this year

alone, the PSC dedicated two ministerial sessions ([1153rd](#) and [1175th](#)) to discuss the financing of AU-led PSOs. Similarly, the UNSC convened a session on 25 May to consider the UN Secretary General's (UNSG) Report released on 1 May.

Informed by the challenges of predictable financing affecting the effective functioning of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and the various regional operations initiated at sub-regional levels including the South African Development Community (SADC) Mission to Mozambique (SAMIM) and the deployment by the East African Community (EAC) to Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the AU PSC during its session on 12 May 2023 under Uganda's chairship lifted the September 2019 decision suspending the engagement of the African three elected members of the UNSC (A3) for negotiating a framework resolution on use of UN assessed contributions and authorized the A3 to 'resume consultations with the relevant stakeholders towards the adoption of a UNSC resolution on financing AU-led PSOs.' The PSC reiterated this authorization and tasked the AU Commission to work with the A3 in developing the resolution for its adoption before the end of 2023. Additionally, during its recent 1175th session, the PSC urged the AU Commission to complete the AU-UN Joint Planning Guidelines for AU-led PSOs. The guidelines aim to create a structure for unified planning, decision-making, and collaboration between the AU and the UN in relation to UN assistance for AU-led PSOs.

In addition to the development of the AU consensus paper and the Secretary General's Report, a notable and significant shift has occurred in the [stance](#) of the US, whose objection and threat led to the suspension of the earlier process towards the adoption of a resolution. The UNSC briefing on 25 May 2023 signalled that there is generally wide support in the UNSC for the proposed resolution on the use of UN assessed contribution. Yet, it also highlighted that there are

outstanding issues requiring further negotiations to achieve the adoption of the resolution. Some UNSC members including among the P5 indicated the importance of the AU clearly outlining its financial sharing plan, warning that any misinterpretation could hinder progress. Some others indicated their expectation of further clarification about fiduciary transparency, reporting and accountability including with respect to General Assembly's 5th Committee processes and on compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law, while others emphasized decision-making, oversight and command and control of the missions financed from UN assessed contributions. There is an expectation that the AU side works on negotiating positions with specific proposals that help achieve consensus on the outstanding issues, particularly with respect to financial burden sharing.

Tomorrow's informal seminar provides a unique opportunity for exploring opportunities for achieving consensus on the outstanding issues including based on the specific pathways identified in the UNSG's May 2023 report. As such, a practical option would be to welcome the UNSG's report and the proposals outlined therein as the basis for taking the negotiations forward.

17th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting

The following day, on 6 October, the PSC and members of the UNSC will hold their 17th joint consultative meeting. The first of the conflict specific agenda items of the consultative meeting is the conflict in Sudan. In this respect, Djibouti and Tunisia take the lead in delivering intervention from the side of the PSC, with Japan, Ghana, Russia and the United Kingdom (UK) taking lead on UNSC's side.

On the situation in Sudan, violent clashes between the

Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been ongoing since 15 April. The war, which is about six months, is causing a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). On the 28 September [humanitarian update](#), OCHA estimated that 5.4 million people have fled their homes since the eruption of the conflict. As Amani Africa pointed out in its [briefing](#) to the PSC on 29 September, the response to the situation leaves a lot to be desired. For example, humanitarian actors are able to reach only 19 percent of the 18 million people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance.

There is also the issue of fragmentation of initiatives for peace making in Sudan. In light of this, the communique of the [1156th session](#) emphasized the need for a single, inclusive, and consolidated peace process for Sudan under the joint auspices of the AU, IGAD, LAS, and UN, along with their partners. Therefore, the joint consultation provides an opportunity for the two Councils to discuss on how to enhance their efforts towards establishing a more inclusive and consolidated peace process. The consultative meeting may thus echo the 1156th session of the PSC on the need for more coordination and streamlining of the efforts for peace in Sudan.

On the situation in the Sahel region, Ghana, Russia, Malta and Switzerland will lead the intervention on the part of the UNSC and Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and Cameroon will take the lead in the intervention on the part of the PSC. The two main areas of concern that may receive attention are the deteriorating security situation with the worsening of conflicts involving terrorist groups and their attacks and the expansion of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in the region. According to UN records, 1,814 incidents of terrorist attacks took place in the Sahel region only in the period from 1st January to 30th June 2023. The resulting fatalities from these

attacks were reportedly 4,593. In the face of such a sustained spike in terrorism and complex political dynamics, they may also highlight the challenges that may arise from the withdrawal of the UN Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In this respect, they may emphasize close coordination on planning the withdrawal and consider the regional response to minimize the impact of the withdrawal while also underscoring the need for effective political, socio-economic, development and humanitarian strategy tailored to addressing the underlying causes and drivers of insecurity and UCG in the Sahel.

On Somalia and ATMIS, Djibouti, Burundi, Uganda, Zimbabwe deliver the interventions on the side of the PSC and UK, UAE, Japan, Mozambique will do so on the side of the UNSC. On the Situation in Somalia, besides the rising tension in Las Anod, a disputed area between Puntland and Somaliland, the discussion of the two Councils is expected to focus principally on the drawdown of ATMIS. In line with the planned timeline for transferring responsibility from ATMIS to Somalia Security Forces (SSF) and ultimately withdrawing ATMIS by December 2024, the second stage of troop reduction was scheduled to occur by the end of September 2023. It was anticipated that approximately 3,000 ATMIS troops would be withdrawn during this phase.

However, a letter from Somalia's national security adviser, submitted to the President of the UNSC on 22 September, states that a request has been made for a 90-day extension in the second phase of the troop pull-out plan. The 1175th session of the PSC held on 23 September, acknowledged "the request by the Federal Government of Somalia to the current President of the UN Security Council, copied to the AU Commission, requesting a technical pause of three months for the phase 2 drawdown of ATMIS troops scheduled for 30 September 2023". Subsequently, the PSC in its session on 30 September endorsed the request for the pause while underscoring the need for addressing the financial and logistical implications of the pause.

Understandably, the implication of this pause together with the earlier extension of the first drawdown on the withdrawal timeline also deserves attention. In this respect, the PSC and UNSC may call on the need for mobilizing further financial resources to enable ATMIS to effectively carry out its mission for meeting the timelines for the incremental transfer of responsibility for Somalia authorities.

On the Situation in the DRC, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe will take the lead in making interventions on the side of the PSC and Brazil, China, France and Gabon will lead in making interventions on the part of the UNSC. On this situation, key issues that may be central to the discussions at the coming consultative meeting include the continuing attacks by armed groups such groups (as the March 23 Movement (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)), attacks on the UN Mission in DRC, the status of international and regional efforts deployed to manage the conflict in eastern DRC; and the upcoming national elections in the country. With respect to the upcoming general elections, while the ongoing preparation for the conduct of the elections at the scheduled time has been a positive step, the heightened political tensions that have accompanied these efforts pose a serious concern. As noted in some details in the 21 September 2023 UN Secretary General's report ([S/2023/691](#)), not only is the election already perceived to be marred with the absence of transparency and inclusivity, but there have also been cases of intimidation, attacks and even killing of representatives and members of opposition political parties.

Regarding the status of efforts deployed through the relevant international and regional mechanisms, the focus may be on the transition plan of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and on the deployment of forces by the EAC and the SADC. In this respect, the PSC and the UNSC may call for more coordination building on the inter-regional

coordination summit held in Luanda, Angola.

In addition to discussing the implications of these developments, the coming consultative meeting may also briefly reflect on the continuing volatile nature of the security situation in North Kivu and Ituri, the two provinces in eastern DRC that have for long been the centre for armed insurgencies and conflict among various armed actors. The humanitarian suffering experienced in these specific areas may also gain some attention. Aside from civilian casualties resulting from attacks perpetrated specifically by the armed groups mentioned above, the rate of displacement in these regions has continued to show increase. Out of 6.1 million people that are displaced within the country, 5.4 million are located in the Ituri and North and South Kivu provinces.

It is expected that the two Councils will adopt a joint communique considering that there are no expectations for major disagreement on any of the agenda items. In the past couple of years, the joint communiqués were adopted in a short period indicating negotiations on their contents have been less challenging as compared to earlier years, including 2016 and 2017 when the adoption of joint communiqués were delayed and in 2019, when an outcome document could not be adopted altogether. As mentioned above, the PSC CoE and the UNSC Working Group have already started meetings on 03 and 04 October to prepare for the consultative meeting and also to negotiate the terms of an outcome document.