

Briefing on the situation in Somalia and the status of AMISOM Post 2021

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Tomorrow (7 December), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to consider the situation in Somalia and receive updates on the status of the discussion on the future of AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) post 2021.

Following the opening remark by Tesfaye Yilma, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia and the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of December, Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), is expected to make statement. Mohamed Omar Gad, PSC Chair for the month of November is expected to present the report of the PSC Field Mission to Somalia conducted last month. Francisco Caetano Madeira, Special Representatives of the Chair of the Commission for Somalia and Head of AMISOM will also make a presentation. The Representative of the Federal Government of Somalia is also expected to make a statement.

This meeting comes after the field mission by members of the AUPSC to Somalia, which took place from 8-10 November 2021. The mission was undertaken in the context of the ongoing discussion between Somalia and the AU on the future of AMISOM and the impending mandate renewal of the mission in December. Members of the AUPSC took the opportunity to demonstrate solidarity with Somalia as it continues to hold its electoral process and strives to consolidate its peace, security and stability.

The last time the Council met in October, the Somali political scene was dominated by a public row between the President and the Prime Minister in relation to a controversy surrounding

the disappearance of a Somali cyber security expert who used to work for the Somalia National Intelligence and Security Agency. The tension has now been somewhat eased and the two leaders have reached a compromise on the appointment of senior security officials. However, the country continues to face so many challenges and the disagreements between the president and the prime minister and the federal government and the federal member states continue to stir political tension in the country, as members of the AUPSC observed during their recent visit.

Regarding the delayed Somali electoral process, some progress has been made recently in completing the election of members of the upper house of the Somali federal parliament. Election of members of the lower house, the House of Peoples, has also started and the process is expected to be concluded before the end of the year. This will then pave the way for the holding of the presidential elections. In a statement issued on 26 November, "International partners urge[d] the completion of inclusive and credible House of the People elections acceptable by all electoral stakeholders and the Somali people according to a published timetable, by 24 December 2021". However, Somali opposition groups who organized themselves under the Union of Presidential Candidates are reportedly saying that they will not accept results of the ongoing parliamentary elections citing lack of transparency and widespread irregularities. The Spokesperson of the group was quoted by the media as having said on 1 December that "The Union of Presidential Candidates declare[d] that it does not condone, accept, and will not be part of the ongoing looting that destroys peace and the state-building process". During its visit in Somalia, the Council underscored the need for the effective, comprehensive and expedited implementation of the September 2020 and May 2021 agreements concerning elections' modalities".

Recently, there have been series of engagements on the future

of AMISOM post-2021. It is to be recalled that, through its Communique adopted at its 1042th meeting on 28 October, the AUPSC had requested the AU Commission to immediately resume consultations with the Somali government and the relevant international partners with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable and workable agreement on the nature, strategic objectives, mandate, size, composition and financing of the AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia, which should include transition benchmarks for the handing over of responsibility for security to the Somali Security Forces.

During the field mission to Somalia, members of the AUPSC engaged with the representatives of the Somali federal government and other international partners. What came out clearly during these discussions was their disagreement with Option 1 of the AU Independent Assessment Report—endorsed by the AUPSC in October—that proposed the establishment of an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia. International partners underscored the need to take into account the views of the Somali government which they believe is critical in garnering the necessary support from the UN and the EU. In this regard, they have proposed the holding of technical discussions to identify possible alternative options that would help in building consensus and eventually guarantee the support of all key stakeholders, including in the Security Council.

The issue was discussed during the 12th consultative meeting of the UN-AU Joint Task Force held virtually on 5 November involving senior officials of the relevant departments of the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission. Subsequently, it was also discussed at the Fifth UN-AU annual conference between the leadership of the two institutions held on 1 December. Divergence of views were said to have been reflected by the two organizations during the discussion on the issue but agreement was reached to establish a joint technical team to engage with key stakeholders on the Somalia Transition Plan

and to develop a joint proposal to be submitted to the Security Council in line with resolution 2568 (2021). Furthermore, the issue is on the agenda of the upcoming joint annual consultative meeting between the UNSC and AUPSC scheduled to take place on 17 December 2021. The experts of the two Councils have been negotiating on the outcome of the meeting and one of the points of disagreement in this negotiation appears to be a language related to Somalia and the issue of predictable and sustainable financing of AMISOM.

The mandate of AMISOM is due to expire this month but these discussions apparently require sometime to allow the host country, the AU, the European Union and the United Nations to agree on a common way forward on the future of AMISOM. The Secretary-General had already written a letter on 29 September to the President of the Security Council explaining the ongoing consultations among the key stakeholders pursuant to resolution 2568 (2021) and requested additional time to finalize these consultations and submit an agreed proposal by the end of the year. Through its Communique adopted at its 1037th meeting on 7 October, the AUPSC also requested the Security Council to consider a technical roll-over of the AMISOM mandate, while discussions continue on the details and modalities for transition towards the post-2021 arrangement. Therefore, there seems to be a possibility for the UNSC to agree on a short extension of the mission's mandate to allow these discussions to be finalized.

The expected outcome is a communiqué. The PSC based on the recommendations of its field mission report may reiterate its previous decision particularly as relates to the establishment of AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia while considering the position of the Federal Government of Somalia and international partners. It may call on the AU Commission to continue discussion with the Federal Government of Somalia on Concept of Operations for a follow-on mission to AMISOM. The PSC may also underline the importance of

continuing consultation between the AU, Federal Government of Somalia, the UN and partners to have a common understanding of AMISOM post 2021. To this end, it may request the UNSC for a technical rollover of AMISOM's mandate to allow more time to reach consensus on the way forward. It may urge Somali political actors to address their differences and ensure that free and fair elections are conducted within the set timeframe.