

Briefing on the Situation in South Sudan

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Tomorrow (14 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will have a session on the situation in South Sudan. This comes two days after the expiry of the extended deadline for the implementation of the pre-transitional tasks. It is expected that Joram Biswaro, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission for South Sudan, is expected to brief the PSC. The last time the AUPSC met to discuss South Sudan was one month ago when it considered the report on the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the country. This session is expected to focus on assessment of the latest situation in South Sudan, including the extension of the pre-transitional period by 100 days and the role the AU could play for completion of the pretransitional tasks within the 100 days.

Considering the limited progress made in implementing the pre-transitional tasks, no one was sure what would happen on 12 November 2019. IGAD and the rest of the international community were insisting that the extended timeline is non-renewable, and that an inclusive transitional government should be formed on the set timeline. President Kiir was also saying that the transitional government will be formed. By contrast, Dr.Reikh Machar was insisting that his forces will not join the transitional government without meaningful progress on the implementation of the pre-transitional tasks, particularly relating to Transitional Security Arrangements and the determination of the number and boundaries of states.

The last two weeks have seen increased activities to avoid the worst and salvage the revitalized peace agreement, including the preservation of the cessation of hostilities and the

ceasefire, which ensured a modicum

of stability. The Security Council had visited Juba and talked with the parties. IGAD had also dispatched a delegation to Juba to undertake similar consultations.

Furthermore, members of the Troika also visited Juba and did the same. President Salva Kiir and Dr. Reikh Machar met face to face on three occasions, twice in Juba and the last one in Kampala.

What eventually saved the situation is the Tripartite Summit that was convened in Kampala by Sudan and Uganda in their capacity as co-guarantors of the agreement. The meeting was critical to facilitate agreement between President Kiir and Dr. Machar to extend the pre-transitional period for one hundred (100) days effective from 12 November and review progress after fifty days from that date. The two principals also agreed to establish a mechanism involving the parties and the guarantors to monitor the implementation of the pending tasks. Under the circumstances, the outcome of the Kampala Tripartite Summit was the least bad option in trying to salvage the revitalized peace agreement and preserve the cessation of hostilities and the ceasefire agreement, thereby avoiding a relapse into another cycle of violence.

Of critical importance for tomorrow's PSC session is the key question of whether the parties will use this window to expedite the implementation of the critical pending tasks. In this regard, it would be of interest to PSC member states to know the role that the AU and its office in Juba would play in supporting the process for achieving the implementation of the pre-transitional tasks including, a clear roadmap and follow-up mechanism.

In terms of helping effective utilization of the limited window of opportunity that the 100 days extension presented, IGAD held two important meetings as a follow-up to the Kampala Tripartite summit. IGAD convened a consultative meeting of the

parties in Addis Ababa on 9 November 2019, ahead of the extraordinary meeting of its Council of Ministers on 10 November 2019. The consultative meeting endorsed the outcome of the Kampala Tripartite Summit, including the extension of the pre-transitional period for 100 days effective from 12 November 2019. The IGAD Council of Ministers, which met on the following day welcomed the outcome of the consultative meeting of the parties, including the endorsement of Kampala Tripartite Summit communique.

The IGAD Council of Ministers initiated the steps to be taken towards the completion of the key pre-transitional tasks within the 100 days. The IGAD Council instructed the IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan in collaboration with R-JMEC, CTSAMVM and the AU Commission to urgently organize a workshop for security mechanisms in Juba to agree on a roadmap with clear timeline for the implementation of Transitional Security Arrangements within the one hundred (100) days extension. It further directed its Special Envoy to facilitate a meeting of the Parties to the R-ARCSS to resolve the issue of the number of states and their boundaries and any other outstanding issues pertaining to the establishment of the Revitalized- Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU).

While these two areas are expected to be a priority, the IGAD Council set the ambition higher by requesting the Special Envoy to continue engaging the non-signatories to the R-ARCSS and organize a retreat for the Leaders of the Parties to the R-ARCSS for trust and confidence building as soon as possible. The Special Envoy has also been entrusted with closely monitoring the progress of implementation of the critical pending tasks during the extended Pre-Transitional Period in close collaboration with Revitalized-Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC) and CTSAMVM. The Ministers called on the Incumbent TGoNU to immediately disburse the USD 100 million to National Pre-Transitional Committee (NPTC) to

enable the completion of the critical pending tasks. In addition, they called on regional and international partners to provide the necessary support to expedite the implementation of pending tasks, while appreciating those that have already done so.

After its visit to Juba, the UN Security Council (UNSC) met and held consultations on the situation in South Sudan last week. The UNSC expressed concern on the lack of substantive progress in the implementation of key elements of the revitalized peace agreement and called on the parties to reaffirm their commitment to the full implementation of the agreement, to clear benchmarks and the cessation of hostilities and ceasefire agreements.

The Council also called on the parties to make immediate progress on pre-transitional tasks, including the security arrangements and a process for the resolution of the number and boundaries of states in order to allow for the peaceful formation of an inclusive transitional government.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in welcoming the decision of the IGAD Council of Ministers based on to the agreement reached in Kampala under the auspices of the Co-Guarantors, urged the parties to use this extension to make further progress on critical benchmarks, including security arrangements and the number and boundaries of states, to allow for the formation of an inclusive transitional government of national unity. He also echoed the call made by IGAD for the Government of South Sudan to release the pledged amount of \$100 million through a transparent and accountable mechanism.

The expected outcome of the session is a communique. AUPSC could welcome the face-to-face meeting between President Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar, leader of the SPLMIO, the signatory of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the South Sudan Conflict (R-ARSSC). It may also welcome the communique adopted by the Tripartite Summit in Kampala, including the agreement

reached to extend the pre-transitional period by hundred days. The Council may endorse the outcome of the consultative meeting of the parties in Addis Ababa and the decision adopted by the IGAD Council of Ministers. It could also urge the parties to demonstrate the necessary political will and commitment to the Revitalized Peace Agreement as the only viable framework for resolving the conflict in South Sudan and build trust and confidence to expedite the implementation of the critical pending tasks to facilitate the formation of an inclusive transitional government. In this connection, it may support the call by IGAD for developing a clear roadmap and the setting up of mechanisms for monitoring and follow up of implementation in collaboration with the AU Commission. It may also call on the parties to exert every possible effort to finding a consensual solution to the issue of number of states and their boundaries. The AUPSC may urge the TGoNU to avail the necessary resources for the implementation of the agreement and appeal to AU member states and partners to provide financial and technical assistance in this regard.