

Briefing on the status of consultation on AMISOM post 2021

Automatic Heading TextDate | 15 February, 2022

Tomorrow (15 February) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1065th session to receive a briefing on the situation in Somalia and update on the consultations on the form that African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) takes at the end of its current mandate on 31 March 2022.

Following the opening remark by Jean Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya and the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of February, Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), is expected to make statement. Francisco 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 (FGS) is also expected to make a statement.

Tomorrow's session comes against the background of series of meetings held in Addis Ababa, Mogadishu and virtually involving the Federal Government of Somalia, the AU and the UN and the EU as well. This is the first session on AMISOM in 2022 since the last time the PSC met in December. It is to be recalled that the PSC's endorsement of option 1 (AU-UN Hybrid Mission) of the AU Independent Assessment Team's report during its 1037th session did not attract the support of Somalia and also the UN. Actually, FGS issued a statement rejecting the PSC's decision. It was in this context that the PSC requested the AU Commission through the communiqué of its 1042nd session to immediately resume consultations with Somalia and the

relevant international partners to reach 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 1053rd session of the PSC, the last time the PSC considered the issue of the transition of AMISOM, it discussed the report of the AU PSC field mission to Mogadishu undertaken in November 2021. It became apparent from consultations during the mission that the proposal for the establishment of an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia did not have the support of Somalia. International partners also 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. As a follow up to these expectations, series of consultations were held between December 2021 and February 2022.

At the end of December 2021, the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate of the AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security held consultations with representatives of the FGS. Following the consultations, the AU and the FGS signed an agreement outlining principles and modalities on the reconfiguration of AMISOM. In pursuit of mobilizing consensus with other stakeholders, two meetings of the Somalia Quartet (FGS, AU, EU and the UN) were held. The first meeting was held on 5 January 2022 during which Quartet members welcoming the AU-FGS agreement on principles and modalities for reconfiguration of AMISOM. The second meeting was held on 26 January and discussed the outcomes of the AU-FGS technical team meeting held during the previous week and discussed the roadmap for the drawing up of the CONOPS for the newly reconfigured mission.

The AU Commission, AMISOM and FGS technical meeting on the parameters and strategic objectives for the New African Union

Transitional Mission to Somalia (ATMIS) was held from 17 to 21 January in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The result of the meeting was the signing of an 11 page long technical document outlining the principles, mandate, strategic end state, exit strategy, objectives, composition and structure of the mission, strategic management and coordination, command and control, mission support, and transition phases and benchmarks. It is envisaged that ATMIS will have a life time of 33 months and the current AMISOM Police and Troop Contributing Countries (P/TCC) and civilian personnel will form the basis of ATMIS with the possibility of expansion of the pool of P/TCCs to other AU member states.

In the communique of its 1053rd session the PSC accordingly acknowledged that any follow-on mission of AMISOM requires the support and consent of the FGS and UNSC – both of which are opposed to the establishment of a hybrid mission. While the PSC recognized the need for alignment of the reconfigured AMISOM to the Somali Transitional Plan (STP), it drew attention to the persisting institutional and capacity challenges faced by the Somalia National Army (SNA) in the fight against Al-Shabaab and emphasized once again the importance of ensuring the multidimensional nature of any follow-on mission and the need to ensure balance between the police, military and civilian components of the mission. During tomorrow's meeting, it would be of interest for members of the PSC to confirm whether the 11-pager outcome of the technical meeting reflects these and other parameters including sustainable and predictable financing that the PSC set within the framework of its 1053rd session.

The AU and Somalia technical team continued their consultation in Mogadishu from 28th January to 9 February 2022 on the development of the Concept of Operations (CONOPs), joint report, and logistical support option for the envisaged new transition mission and they were joined by the technical teams from the UN and the EU. The joint statement issued following

these technical meetings welcomed the roadmap developed by the Quartet on the finalization of the CONOPs, the joint report and the logistical support option. These documents are expected to be submitted to the Quartet principals for their consideration and endorsement. Subsequently, the final documents will be presented to the AUPSC and the Security Council.

The joint AU-Somalia proposal bases its assumptions on the effective implementation of the STP which will allow the new mission to handover security responsibilities to the Somali Security forces and winddown its operations in a matter of two years or so. But given the experiences of the past, this could be considered overly optimistic. The implementation of the transition plan was indeed fraught with so many challenges. In recent years, Al-Shabaab has also gained significant strength in continuing to create havoc and mayhem in Somalia. What contributed to this situation is the political crisis in the country and the ongoing tension between the center and the regions which has been further exacerbated by the ongoing election process. Therefore, this and other issues could possibly be raised at the AUPSC by TCCs and others.

The AUPSC will receive an update on these series of consultations which appear to have contributed to the progress made in shaping an agreed proposal by the AU and Somalia on the future of AMISOM through a newly reconfigured transition mission. However, there is no indication that AMISOM TCCs have been consulted and their views taken on board in the new joint AU-Somalia proposal. It is also the TCCs that pushed very hard for an AU-UN multidimensional mission which was proposed by the AU independent assessment and later endorsed by the AUPSC. In its communique adopted on 28 October 2021, the AUPSC also reaffirmed its decision based on its conviction that it would ensure strategic, predictable and sustainable multi-year financing for the future mission, through UN assessed contributions. It is not clear how the joint proposal will

address this particularly important issue going forward. During his recent visit to Nairobi, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell was quoted as having said that “the EU will not fund the Mission based on its old structure that focused on combat and troops on the ground with little attention to rebuilding institutions”.

At the time of publishing this insight, the form of the outcome document of the session is unknown. If the PSC opts to adopt an outcome document, it will take the form of a communiqué. The PSC is expected to take note of the progress made in the consultations. The Council may reiterate its concern over the delay in the finalization of the election process in Somalia and urge the speedy finalization of the election. The Council may express concern over the volatile security situation in Somalia and the continued attack by Al-Shabaab. With respect to the consultations on ATMIS, the PSC is expected to welcome the consensus reached between the AU and FGS on the details relating to the transition mission. The PSC is expected to call for the finalization of the CONOPS for ATMIS and its submission for its consideration and adoption with active participation of P/TCCs. In terms of the duration and the various phases of the ATMIS, the PSC may call for a realistic plan that is flexible enough to allow adjustments based on the security situation on the ground and the progress made in the implementation of the STP, including Somalia Security Forces capacity to take over security responsibility for the AU mission. The PSC may also reiterate its position on the imperative for predictable and sustainable multi-year financing for ATMIS.