



Media and Research Services



Insights on the Peace & Security Council

The Peace and Security Council in 2019: The Year in Review

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Highlights of the year

Various important developments have been witnessed in the work of the PSC in 2019. One such most notable engagement of the PSC was its handling of the transition in Sudan following the ouster from power of Sudan's longtime President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 after sustained popular protest against his government for several months. Another important file with respect of which the PSC, working in tandem with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), achieved relative success in averting the derailment of the electoral process in the country and its descent into further political instability and violence was Guinea-Bissau. Although it has continued to face major challenges, another conflict situation in respect of which measures taken by the AU Commission, under the auspices of the PSC, in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) was the successful peace-making effort that led to the signing on 6 February of a peace agreement between the government of the Central African Republic (CAR) and 14 armed rebel groups in the CAR.

For the first time in a long time, the PSC also held sessions involving an inter-state dispute (Kenya-Somalia) and a briefing session on another inter-state tension (Rwanda-Uganda). Also, of interest in this context is the

decision of the PSC authorizing the 'deployment of an AU Mission Against Ebola in DRC (MAEC)' to the DRC to support the effort of combating the epidemic.

2019 marked the 15th anniversary of the commencement of the work and launch of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in March and May 2004 respectively. It was after 15 years that the PSC initiated steps to implement key provisions of Articles 15 and 19 of the PSC Protocol. Accordingly, during the month of May under the Chairpersonship of Rwanda, the PSC Convened the first annual consultative meeting of the PSC and the policy organs of the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECS/RMS). In August under Zimbabwe's chairpersonship, the PSC also convened the inaugural consultative session of the PSC and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The adoption by the PSC of a Manual on its Working Methods also constitutes another notable development in as far as the organization of work of the PSC is concerned. This helps in institutionalizing the practice of the PSC in how it organizes and carries out its work and in establishing a level of transparency and predictability for understanding how the PSC works.

Activities of the PSC

In 2019 the PSC held around 80 sessions. This is almost the same number of sessions that the PSC convened in

2018. While some 40 of the sessions dealt with specific country/regional conflict situations, the remaining sessions focused on thematic issues. This shows that, compared to the preceding two years, the PSC held more sessions on specific country/regional conflict situations than on thematic issues in 2019. While the PSC dealt with two new specific conflict or crisis situations involving the attempted unconstitutional change of government in Gabon and the maritime boundary dispute between Kenya and Somalia, it only dedicated one session and three sessions respectively for these two sessions. Outside of these two additions, much of the country or regional conflict situations on the agenda of the PSC are those carried from 2018.

However, from country specific conflict situations that the PSC sessions addressed in 2018, the situations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar were not addressed in 2019. Burundi's is most notable since it constituted half of the 6 sessions that the PSC dedicated to the Central African region in 2018. It is to be recalled that the PSC at its 794th meeting called for the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the deployment of the human rights monitors and the military observers deployed in Burundi and at its 808th session the PSC decided to 'maintain the human rights observers and military experts in Burundi in order for them to support the Government and people in Burundi in their quest for peace and stability, particularly as they prepare for the 2020 elections.' With no sessions held in 2019 on Burundi, there was no follow up to these previous decisions of the PSC. It is worth noting that as indicated in the Annual Indicative Program of Work

Burundi is one of the situations that the PSC remains seized with.

From the total sessions, four were held at ministerial level: two on country specific crisis and two on thematic issues and the remaining meetings were at ambassadorial level. Unlike in the previous year, in 2019 there were no sessions that took place at the Heads of State and Government level. From the 70 available outcome documents of PSC meetings, 20 were press statements and 50 were communiqués.

Regional distribution of PSC activities in 2019

In terms of trends in the peace and security dynamics of the continent, three regions witnessed deterioration. The situations in West Africa and the Sahel, East and Horn of Africa and North Africa worsened. The region that witnessed relative improvement was the Central Africa region. This was mainly due to relative improvement in the situation in the DRC.

As reflected in the table below, from 40 of the total country/region focused sessions held in 2019, the sessions that addressed conflicts and crisis situations in East and Horn of Africa region account for 50 % of such sessions. The last time another region, Central Africa, came close to displacing this region in terms of the attention it received was in 2013. As such, while the dominance of the share of this region on the agenda of the PSC is reflective of similar patterns from previous years, this year's share represents a significant percentage of PSC sessions. The 20 sessions dedicated to this region

constitutes nearly 1/4th of the total number of sessions the PSC held in 2019, a marked increase from 2018.

Regional distribution of the total country/region focused sessions held from January 2019 to December 2019

| Northern Africa | East and Horn of Africa | Central Africa | West Africa and the Sahel | Southern Africa |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 4 (only on Libya) | 20 | 8 (6 sessions on CAR) | 9 | 1 |

East and Horn of Africa

This is one of the regions that witnessed deterioration in its peace and security standing. This was not only on account of the persistent of the stalemate in the peace process in South Sudan and the insecurity in Somalia but also the major threat of instability that faced Sudan following the ouster of President Bashir and the seizure by the military of power in April (which is reflected in the percentage of PSC session agenda dedicated to it). It is important to note that some relative improvement has been registered following the establishment of a transitional civilian-led government in Sudan during the third quarter of the year.

Although this region occupied much of the agenda of the PSC, like the previous years, the large number of sessions attributed to this region principally concern the situations in the Sudans and Somalia. Of these nearly half of the sessions were dedicated to the situation in Sudan, focusing on the crisis that ensued following the seizure of power by the army after the ouster of Bashir on 11 April. Indeed, the PSC dedicated eight sessions on this specific situation.

Sudan

In an attempt to facilitate transfer of power to a transitional civilian authority in line with the AU norms banning military seizure of power, the PSC at its 840th session demanded ‘that the Sudanese military step aside and hand over power to a transitional civilian-led political authority...within a maximum period of fifteen (15) days from the date of the adoption of the present communiqué, failing which, Council will automatically apply Article 7(g) of its Protocol, in particular the suspension of the participation of the Sudan in all AU’s activities until the restoration of constitutional order’.

Although the PSC extended the timeline for transfer of power by the military for additional period of 60 days during its 846th session, following the recommendation of a non-statutory AU Consultative Summit of the Regional Partners of The Sudan convened by the AU Chairperson on 23 April for extension of the two weeks deadline by three months, it indicated that it would take appropriate measures at any point during the additional two months deadline. Following the deterioration of the instability in the country and the lack of progress in the negotiations for transfer of power to a transitional civilian

authority, the PSC, prompted by the deadly assault that security forces unleashed against unarmed civilians at the sit-in outside of the army headquarters in Khartoum on 3 June, imposed sanction on Sudan by suspending it from participation in the activities of the AU during an emergency meeting of its 854th session held on 6 June.

Given the AU Commission Chairperson's appeal in his briefing to the PSC to give Sudan more time and the lack of support from the region (and other external actors supporting the army) for a PSC action, the decision of the PSC suspending Sudan was remarkable and proved to be constructive for the resolution of the situation. In delegitimizing the military and validating the voice of Sudanese actors calling for transfer of power to a civilian authority, this PSC action has successfully created the momentum and diplomatic pressure needed for enabling the negotiation process on transfer of power achieve a breakthrough. On 6 July, the Sudanese parties concluded a power sharing deal. Subsequently, on 17 August, they signed the Constitutional Declaration that established the distribution of power between the civilian authorities and the representatives of the army that form part of the Sovereign Council, that shares executive power with the civilian led and dominated cabinet headed by a Prime Minister.

Following the establishment of the Sovereign Council and the appointment of Abdela Hamdok, the PSC at its 875th session held on 6 September lifted the suspension of Sudan.

The PSC also dedicated four sessions on the situation in Darfur, Sudan and the UN and AU Hybrid Mission to Darfur (UNAMID). Of note in this respect is its decision

to put on hold the process of the drawdown of UNAMID in the context of the impact of the political crisis on the security situation in Darfur. During the turmoil period in May Sudan's then governing body – the Transitional Military Council (TMC) – had released a decree demanding that the remaining UNAMID bases be handed over directly to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The PSC at its 856th session strongly opposed this measure and directed the TMC to 'immediately, without conditions rescind this decision and allow UNAMID to handover identified assets to civilian entities'. It further halted any further drawdown and decided to relocate the remaining troops in areas considered hot spots.

South Sudan

The PSC held only four sessions on the situation in South Sudan. Unlike the case of Sudan, PSC seems to have taken the role of a supporting actor complementing the lead role of IGAD. Accordingly, it followed IGAD and the neighboring countries in the effort to prevent the total unraveling of the peace process. Through IGAD's facilitation, the formation of Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity was extended to six-month from 12 May to 12 November, which the PSC supported.

On 14 November as well at its 894th session the PSC welcomed the 100 days additional extension of the pre-transitional period, not least because it prevented the imminent collapse of the ceasefire and hence the relapse of the country back to conflict.

Somalia and AMISOM

The PSC held five sessions on the situation in Somalia and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

The first two of these sessions were held in February focusing on the consideration of the new Concept of Operations (CONOPS) of AMISOM that the PSC called for at its 782nd session in 2018. On 4 February, the PSC considered the new CONOPS, which envisaged a three-phased process of the reconfiguration and progressive handing over of responsibilities to Somalia Security Forces (SSF). Contentions surrounding the proposed withdrawal of 1000 AMISOM troops by end of February (pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2431) to be from Burundi (which Burundi said was contrary to the agreement of the TCCs for it to be on a pro rata basis) and paragraph 12 on external interference (that contained list of countries, including AU member state), meant that the PSC was able to adopt the CONOPS at its next session held on 13 February. While the initial proposal on the withdrawal of 1000 Burundian troops was upheld, it was initially proposed that subsequent withdrawals would be undertaken ‘based on the prevailing security situation and an agreed joint assessment’.

Its session on 9 May renewed the mandate of AMISOM for a further period of 12 months until 27 May 2020 and called for a quarterly report by the Chairperson of the Commission on the implementation of the communique adopted at that session. The first quarterly report of the AUC Chairperson was considered during its 865th session held on 7 August. The next report of the Chairperson of the Commission was submitted in December. Following the consideration of the report at its 901st session, the PSC welcomed ‘the decision of the Commission to implement the upcoming drawdown of the 1000 AMISOM troops, by February 2020, by pro-rata on all the Troop Contributing Countries’ & requested the

AU Commission to provide it with strategic advice by June 2020 on options for AU engagement post-2021 upon the exit of AMISOM.

Kenya-Somalia maritime boundary dispute

Another agenda item on which the PSC held two sessions was the maritime boundary dispute between Kenya and Somalia. This was an item put on the agenda of the PSC on the request of Kenya. The first session was held on 22 August with Somalia declining to attend the session. During the second meeting held at its 873rd session at which both countries participated, the PSC while recognizing the pending case on the dispute before the International Court of Justice, urged the two countries to seek amicable and sustainable solutions and tasked the Chairperson of the AU Commission to provide his good offices to that end.

West Africa and the Sahel

The situation in West Africa and the Sahel region exhibited the most deterioration. Incidents of terrorist attacks are increasing at an unprecedented scale both in frequency and geographic spread. There have been 445 incidents of terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso between January and September 2019, this is much higher than the 405 such incidents that took place in this country from 2015 to 2018. The combination of porous borders, inter-communal tensions and large swaths of poorly governed territories as well as large number of marginalized youth have heightened fears that this trend would deepen not only in Burkina Faso and Mali and Niger but also into other parts of West Africa. On 12 December, armed

militants ambushed an army camp in Western Niger killing at least 71 soldiers in a deadliest attack the country witnessed in recent years. Two similar attacks that took place in Mali claimed the lives of 53 soldiers and one civilian in the first attack and 24 soldiers in the second attacks.

Mali and Sahel

Despite such marked deterioration in the security situation of the region, the PSC held only two sessions on the situation in Mali and the Sahel. At its 838th session in April the PSC renewed the mandate of the G5 Sahel Joint Force for a further period of 12 months until 12 April 2020. PSC also agreed to undertake a field mission to G5 Sahel region, although it did not follow through with this decision. Similarly, at its 863rd session the PSC reiterated this commitment and decided to undertake a joint field mission with the European Union Political and Security Committee (EUPSC) in November 2019, to assess the situation and to provide support, although this has not materialized.

Guinea Bissau

Another situation in this region that received particular attention has been Guinea Bissau. The PSC not only held three sessions on the situation but also undertook a field mission to the country. The PSC was also received a briefing on Guinea Bissau in the context of the its periodic briefing on elections in Africa held in June. At its 855th session held on 11 June, following the lead of ECOWAS, added its diplomatic pressure to unlock the

intransigency of the country's President for ensuring the appointment of the parliamentary government in accordance with the outcome of the March 2019 parliamentary elections and to announce the date of the presidential election before the end of his term of office on 23rd June. It also decided 'to urgently dispatch the PSC Troika to Guinea Bissau'. Along with the mission of the PSC to Guinea Bissau on 16-18 June, this diplomatic effort contributed to unlocking the impasse leading to both the establishment of the new government led by the Prime Minister from the parliamentary majority and the commencement of parliamentary session following agreement on the composition of the speakers of parliament.

The PSC also contributed to the effort of ECOWAS that averted a constitutional crisis and the attempt particularly of the President's camp to create conditions for the postponement of the elections scheduled for 24 November. In a strongly worded communique of its 892nd session, the PSC 'condemned the illegal dismissal of the legitimate and internationally recognized Government of Guinea Bissau, and the appointment of a new Prime Minister' and 'declared the unconstitutional Decrees issued by President Jose Mario Vaz, on 28 and on 29 October 2019 null and void'. Together with the pressure from ECOWAS, this precipitated the resignation of the new Prime Minister along with the members of his government. The PSC held another session on 18 November to sustain its engagement for maintaining the continental pressure on Guinea Bissau actors and AU's support for the critical role of ECOWAS. All these contributed to the convening of the presidential election as scheduled.

The Gambia

This is one of the two post-conflict/crisis situations that is listed in the list of items that the PSC is seized with in the annual program. The Gambia has featured in the PSC agenda particularly in the context of AU's role in the institutional reform efforts of the country including, Security Sector Reform. To this end the PSC underlined the importance of finalizing and adopting the National Security Council Act. At its 844th session, the PSC extended the mandate of the AU Technical Team to the Gambia, which have been deployed by the AU to support the SSR and the constitutional review processes, for an additional period of twelve (12) months, until 31 August 2020.

Lake Chad Basin Region

Straddling West Africa, Central Africa and the Sahel is the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region, which in the context of the terrorist threats facing it including from Boko Haram featured twice in 2019. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Secretariat is tasked to provide biannual briefing on the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization. It briefed the PSC at its 838th session in April 2019 and the Council called for a 'comprehensive and rapid implementation of the Regional Strategy'.

At its 898th session held in November, the PSC held a session on the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) operating in the LCB region. During the session, the PSC received the report of the AUC Chairperson on the MNJTF and expressed deep concern over the continued use by Boko Haram of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for reconnaissance operations within the MNJTF

Area of Operation. While renewing the mandate of the MNJTF for a further period of twelfth months as of 31 January 2020, the PSC stressed 'the imperative of adopting a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy to address the Boko Haram threat'.

Central Africa

The Central African Republic

From the total 8 sessions that focused on Central Africa, six were on CAR. At its 821st session, the PSC received a briefing on the joint efforts by the AUC under the leadership of Smail Chergui and UN Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, on their efforts in facilitating the peace process between the government and armed groups, which resulted in the signing of Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation (APPR) on 6 February.

In order to build on the momentum generated with the signing of the peace agreement, the AU has appointed a new Special Representative and Head of Office for the AU Office in CAR. At its 826th session, the PSC 'requested the Chairperson of the Commission to establish an Implementation and Monitoring Mechanism (MOS) in security sector reform, cross-border cooperation and decentralisation' and decided 'to carry out a quarterly review of the situation in the CAR and the implementation of the Bangui Agreement' on the basis of progress report that the PSC requested the AUC Chairperson to submit to it. The PSC also called on 'UNSC to adapt MINUSCA's mandate to the provisions of the Bangui Agreement'.

With the parties unable to agree on the formation of a government and the peace agreement facing collapse, the AU convened a meeting in Addis Ababa. The PSC at its 834th session welcomed ‘the consensus reached by the signatories to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR to form an inclusive government’. Unfortunately, the peace process has remained fragile, with repeated breaches and resumption of fighting. At its 868th the PSC urged for cessation of hostilities throughout the territory. Manifesting apparent frustration, it also warned those that obstruct the peace process in the country indicating its readiness to consider appropriate punitive measures.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The focus of the PSC on DRC has been on the Ebola outbreak in Eastern part of the country Congo, which was particularly exacerbated due to attacks by armed groups on health personnel engaged in supporting the fight against the outbreak. At its 862nd session, the PSC, considering ‘the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the DRC as a source of grave concern, as well as a serious threat to peace and security in DRC, the region and the continent as a whole,’ decided to authorize the immediate deployment of an AU Mission Against Ebola in DRC (MAEC). This is the second mission to be authorized by the PSC in relation to a similar health epidemic after AU’s mission to West Africa (ASEOWA) that was deployed to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2014. However, there has been no follow up to this decision of the PSC. No session was held on the development of ‘a Concept of Operations for the MAEC’ that the PSC called for. These notwithstanding, the AU convened on 2 December a privet sector and partners

forum for mobilizing support for its engagements in the DRC to combat the Ebola outbreak, through the Africa Centre for Disease Control.

Uganda-Rwanda

Another inter-state issue that was not on the agenda of the PSC but became an agenda on which the PSC received a briefing on the regional efforts for resolving the tensions between the two countries. Accordingly, at its 871st session, the PSC received a briefing from Angola and, in a press statement it adopted, welcomed the signing of MOU, on 21 August 2019, between the Republics of Rwanda and Uganda aimed at improving the bilateral relations between them with the facilitation by Angola.

North Africa

North Africa is another region that experienced deepening insecurity largely due to the heightened fighting between the internationally recognized government of Libya and the opposition armed forces led by the reneged general Khalifa Haftar. The situation is made worse due to the heavy interreference of outside actors from near and far. Most recently, Turkey announced to send troops to Libya in support of the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, which is under heavy military pressure from Haftar forces that were pushing for sizing Libya’s capital for months.

Libya was the only North African country that featured on the agenda of the PSC in the year 2019. Although it was not included in the various monthly provisional programs of work, the PSC has added the situation in its sessions at various points during the year. In April 2019

in the context of the worsening fighting and the deadly bombing attack on migrants, the PSC held two sessions. At its 839th session the PSC called for immediate and total ceasefire and immediate end of external interference. It also emphasized the need for complementarity of efforts between AU and UN in the context of the efforts to enhance the role of the AU in the effort to resolve the crisis including by championing the hosting by the AU Commission of an all-inclusive national reconciliation conference and a single roadmap. It reiterated these policy positions at its 844th session. None of these materialized. Similarly, its call, including during the 13th annual consultative meeting with the UNSC, for the appointment of a joint AU/UN envoy did not also receive UN's support.

The PSC has also voiced its concern on the conditions of the African migrants in Libya. At the 857th session, the PSC condemned what it called 'the savage attack carried out on 3 July 2019 at Tajoura Migrant Detention Centre' and mandated the AU Commission Chairperson, in consultation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, to institute an investigation into the incident. It also urged the Libyan authorities to dismantle all detention centers/camps in Libya. Once again, none of these were followed up and hence did little to change the situation, making this one of the situations on which the PSC exerted little influence.

Southern Africa

The only situation that featured on the agenda of the PSC from Southern Africa in 2019 was the xenophobic violence against African migrants in South Africa. The session was held on 11 September at the Council's 879th

session. Although the PSC held the session on this issue at its 879th session in September, the communique was publicized only after the PSC reviewed the draft communique on 28 October. This review was done in accordance with Paragraph 57 of the Manual on Working Methods of the PSC that stipulates that 'if the PSC Members fail to agree after the second round of the silence procedure, the PSC Secretariat, in consultation with the PSC Chairperson will organize a formal meeting of the PSC to reconsider and adopt a draft communique or press statement.'

The version of the communique that was finally adopted following the 28 October session urged the Government of South Africa and those countries concerned to provide protection for all foreign nationals and their properties from any form of attack. It also tasked the AUC to hold a continental conference on the issue of xenophobia and report the outcome of the conference to the PSC and the Assembly.

Thematic Issues

In 2019, the PSC dedicated about 40 of its sessions to deliberate on standing and emerging thematic issues. Constituting only half of the sessions of the PSC for the year, this represents a decrease in the percentage that thematic issues occupied on the agenda of the PSC compared to the previous two years. The PSC also held two inaugural meetings and addressed thematic issues, which have not been tabled or followed up for a long time.

| Thematic issues | Peace support operations | Field visits | Inaugural meetings |
|---|--|--|--|
| About 25 sessions on various thematic issues | 13 session on review and mandate renewal of AMISOM, UNAMID, MNJTF, G5, ACIRC harmonization with ASF and a dedicated session on the challenges faced by AU led PSOs | Three field visits: South Sudan (March), Guinea Bissau (June), Gambia (July) | Inaugural meetings with: REC/RMs and ACHPR |

The PSC held two inaugural meetings one with the policy and decision making organs of the RECs/RMs and the other one was the consultative meeting with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR).

The PSC and RECs/RMs in their joint communiqué decided to hold annual consultative meetings ahead of the mid-year coordination summit between the AU and RECs/RMs and to strengthen regular information sharing and interaction. It was also decided in the communiqué to undertake joint field missions, retreats and sessions. In the follow up session the 870th session the PSC decided to convene a joint retreat with RECs/RMs by January 2020 in order to brainstorm and reflect on decision-making, harmonization and coordination and to produce a

report that will be presented at the February 2020 Summit.

Similarly, the 866th session of the PSC decided to institutionalize its collaboration with the ACHPR through an annual joint consultative meeting (to be held in August of every year), regular briefings and information sharing, a standing thematic agenda on human rights and peace and security and joint field missions and collaboration on investigation missions.

During the course of the year the PSC renewed the mandate of the four AU mandated, authorized and one of hybrid peace support operations: AMISOM, UNAMID, G5 Sahel Joint Fore and MNJTF.

Although the mandate of the AU High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan was due for renewal (as its current mandate was renewed until 31 December 2019), there was however no session for renewing this particular mandate.

The standing open sessions on women, peace and security as well as the commemoration of UNSC 1325, Children Affected by Armed Conflicts, Prevention of the Ideology of Hate, Genocide, and Hate Crimes in Africa, Youth, Peace and Security and the commemoration of Amnesty Month were held. The number of sessions on women, peace and security has increased in 2019. Apart from the regular session on the theme, on 23 July the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence jointly with the AUC Special Envoy on WPS addressed the PSC on the specific vulnerabilities of women related to the violence they are subjected to during conflict.

During the 19th year anniversary of UNSC resolution 1325, the office of the Special Envoy on WPS presented its first report utilizing the Continental Results Framework (CRF) for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the WPS agenda. The Framework was adopted by the PSC in 2018 and officially launched in February 2019.

The Youth Peace and Security Agenda has also registered progress following the appointment of the AU Special Youth Envoy. On 15 November, the PSC was briefed on the activities that took place since the Inaugural Youth, Peace and Security session in October 2018. The draft Study on the Roles and Contributions of Youth to Peace and Security in Africa and the Framework on Youth Peace and Security were presented to the PSC. Moreover, the five regional African Youth Peace Ambassadors (AYAP) were also made public at the same PSC session.

The other standing meeting was the 13th annual consultative meeting with the UNSC, which focused on Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic and the Sahel region. This was preceded by the 4th joint informal seminar, which included agenda items on Silencing the Guns in Africa and exchange views on modalities for conduct of joint field missions in Africa. Moreover, the PSC held its annual interactive consultation with the UN Peacebuilding Commission at its 893rd session on 11 November. This is the fourth interactive session since the first one in October 2016 where both entities decided to institutionalize their interaction.

Another thematic issue that the PSC has also paid particular attention to during 2019 related to climate change induced disasters and their implication on the

peace and security of the continent. It held three sessions relating to this theme.

The PSC also held a session on emerging security threats related to cyber security on 20 May. The PSC has not convened a dedicated session on this particular topic since 2016. In its 850th session communiqué the Council requested the AUC jointly with RECs/RMs, to develop a Continental Cyber Security Strategy and a cyber security Model Law, and to report to the PSC ahead of the 2020 Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly and it also decided to dedicate an annual session on cyber security, although a specific timeline was not established.

International disarmament and the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons has been another thematic agenda of the PSC on which it dedicated about three sessions. The launch of the first continental analysis of illicit flows of arms jointly conducted by the AUC and Small Arms survey was critical in examining the scale, supply and patterns of arms in Africa. On 18 July, the PSC was briefed on the key findings of the report and which it also endorsed by the end of the session.

There were certain thematic issues that did not make it to the agenda of the PSC in 2019. These include terrorism, PCRd and early warning and conflict prevention. There was also no interactive meeting with the ICRC.

Although the PSC addresses the issue of terrorism when considering regional peace and security issues, in 2019 it hasn't considered the continental report on terrorism, despite the fact that it was included in a few of the monthly programs of work of the PSC during the year. Similarly, the planned session of the PSC on AUC report on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development

(PCRD) did not materialize, although it was included in different occasions in several monthly programs of work of the PSC.

While the PSC discussed the issue of conflict prevention particularly in the context of the retreat it held in Rabat, Morocco in June and the adoption of the conclusions of the Cairo Retreat from 2018, it did not have the quarterly session on early warning and conflict prevention as mandated by its decision. During the course of this year the PSC received a horizon scanning briefing only once, which took place at the end of the year on 13 December. Equally it received only two briefings on elections during the course of the year, instead of the quarterly briefing on this theme expected from the Department of Political Affairs.

The PSC has also introduced new themes in 2019. It assessed the presence of foreign militaries on the continent at its 868th session at which it voiced its concern over external interference into the continent's peace and security matters. Hence the PSC has requested to be briefed by the Commission with the support of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) at least twice a year. It further requested the Military Staff Committee to undertake a comprehensive study on foreign military presence and military bases in Africa, and made a commitment to provide a special report, in line with the 2020 AU theme, to be submitted to the ordinary session of the Assembly of the AU in February 2020.

PSC has also introduced other themes and interactions. The PSC has held its first interactive session with the

AUC. It reviewed the partnerships between the AUC and non-African members states and organizations.

It also addressed thematic issues which have not featured for a long time on its agenda, namely popular uprising. During its 871st session the PSC recognized the complexity around popular uprising due to the absence of a universally agreed upon definition. It requested the AUC to rapidly finalize the draft AU framework on responses to popular uprisings and to submit the draft back to the Council. The PSC also underlined the need to differentiate between legitimate concerns of people and the risks of those demands to be hijacked by other forces.

The flagship project on Silencing the Guns (STG) by 2020 featured four times on the agenda of the PSC. The AU High Representative for STG held an interactive session with the PSC on 5 February in which the components of the STG roadmap were discussed including issues related to governance, inclusive peace processes, curbing illicit flows of arms for the realization of conflict free. The initiative has also received support from the UNSC through the collaboration between the A3 and the AU High Representative. On 27 February 2019, the AU Representative presented the AU strategy for silencing the guns to the UNSC during Equatorial Guinea's presidency, which resulted in the adoption of Resolution 2457 (2019) on STG in Africa by the Year 2020.

Towards operationalizing the objectives of STG, the 832nd session of the PSC requested the Commission to establish a mechanism for measuring and reporting on progress of implementation of the STG Plan of Action. During the commemoration of the Africa Amnesty Month

on 5 September the PSC stressed the importance of the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons in realizing a conflict free Africa, which require the active support and participation of RECs/RMs.

The PSC held four ministerial meetings in 2019, two focusing on country specific situations, which took place on the margins of AU Summits, and the other, two focused on thematic issues:

On the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), 9 February

On the situation in Libya and on the plight of African Migrants in Libya, 5 July, Niamey

Interdependence between peace, security and development: towards a collective engagement for action, in New York, 27 September

National Reconciliation, Restoration of Peace, Security and Rebuilding of Cohesion in Africa, 5 December in Luanda

The ministerial session on interdependence between peace, security and development called for the strengthened collaboration between the different departments within the AU Commission and AU Specialized Agencies to support the PSC in facilitating this cross-sectoral coordination and tasked the AUC Chairperson, to submit, annual report on the measures taken to this end.

The 899th PSC ministerial session on National Reconciliation, similarly made commitments on priorities related to PCRDR efforts. It decided to dedicate an annual session on national reconciliation and peacebuilding, to

undertake a review of the implementation of the Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa and to activate the PSC-Sub committee on PCRDR.

APSA

In 2019, the operationalization of APSA particularly in terms of the coordination of the various components with the PSC has been marginal. The PSC held regular meetings only on one of the APSA components, the African Standby Force. It did not hold sessions pertaining to the activities of the Panel of the Wise. It held a session on 17 April on the Peace Fund. However, it did not issue a formal outcome document. The quarterly interactions and briefings on conflict prevention were also not regular.

On the ASF, at its 821st session the PSC in line with Assembly Decisions 679 and 695, called for ACIRC to be integrated within the continental Framework. Toward this end the PSC adopted a roadmap listing the steps that need to be taken for the complete integration by June 2019 and reporting to the Assembly by 2020. It also tasked the chairs between January and July 2019 to hold monthly sessions on the harmonization progress. However the ACIRC harmonization to the ASF featured in the agenda of the PSC until September 2019.

Based on the consideration of the APSA study conducted by the PSD, at the Cairo retreat, the PSC decided on the direction of its reform process. In a broad manner, the conclusions of the retreat recommended for the PSC to focus on strengthening the use of existing tools and mechanisms and enhance its work in areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and in solidifying its working methods.

Retreats

The PSC held two retreats and adopted the conclusions of a retreat convened in 2018 in Cairo. The first retreat of the year was held in February in Zanzibar served as an induction forum for the incoming PSC members prior to assumption of their positions starting from 1 April and to discuss the working methods of the Council.

The PSC also held its 12th retreat in Rabat from 24-26 June on the Manual on the Working Methods of the PSC and on strengthening its work on conflict prevention, management and peace consolidation in Africa. Following the retreat the PSC officially adopted its working methods in July at its 861st session. The working document, which draws from the PSC Protocol, Rule of Procedure the conclusions of the various retreats held over the years, provided a structure to the ways in which the Council delivers on its mandate and conducts its activities.

On 16 September 2019 the PSC adopted the conclusions of its eleventh retreat held in Cairo from 29 to 31 October 2018. Towards enhancing the effectiveness of the PSC, the Council conclusively agreed to rule out the option of revising the PSC protocol rather it opted for strengthening the Council's work in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management, as well as enhancing its working methods.

Although there was a planned retreat in November on the Peace Fund to discuss the modalities of contribution and use of the Fund, it has since been postponed to 2020.

Field Missions

The PSC undertook three field missions during the course of the year. The first field mission of the year was to South Sudan, which took place in March. In South Sudan, the PSC under Kenya's chairpersonship followed up on the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), signed in September 2018. The mission also took place following the visit by the AU High Level Ad Hoc Committees on South Sudan (AU-C5) and after receiving its briefing.

PSC mission in Guinea Bissau was a preventive visit that took place in anticipation of the political impasse linked to the Presidential election. From 16-18 June, under Sierra Leone's chairpersonship the PSC conducted the field mission to Guinea Bissau during the political stalemate and the increased tension leading up to the end of the President's five year term on 23 June. The Council conducted the mission to urge the President to announce the date for Presidential elections before 23 June. On 18 June, President Vaz set the date of the presidential election for 24 November.

Under Togo's chairpersonship, the PSC conducted a field mission from 28-31 July to the Gambia. The mission aimed at assessing the institutional reform, which the country is undertaking and the support provided by the AU Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG). At its 879th PSC session, when considering its mission report, the Council requested the AUC Chair to mandate the AU Development Agency to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources to support the efforts of the government.

Moreover, in 2019 the PSC planned to undertake a field mission to the Sahel before the end of the year, although it did not materialize.

The PSC has also decided to undertake a field mission to Sudan and particularly to Darfur in the beginning of 2020 to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the country. Hence this will be one of the anticipated mission's given the political developments that took place in the past one year in the country, the security situation in Darfur and the plan on the exit of UNAMID in June 2020.



MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

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Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research; training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amani Africa wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of Switzerland, the Embassy of Germany and the British Embassy in Addis Ababa



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



Embassy
of the Federal Republic of Germany
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British Embassy
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