

New members of the PSC after the elections of the members for 3-year term

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The election for the 5 members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) was held on 8 February 2019 at the meeting of the Executive Council. The election was held at the level of the Executive Council based on the decision of the AU Assembly that delegated the authority of electing members of the PSC to the Council. This brief provides an update on the conduct and result of the elections.

Candidacy

As shown in the info-graph below, there were 7 AU member states in the list of candidates. Of the seven candidates, Kenya and Nigeria are current members of the PSC seeking re-election. There is no candidate running for election for the first time. Except Sudan, all the other candidates have served in the PSC at least two previous terms.

The dynamics in the regional processes for candidacy for the PSC elections vary from region to region. While any member states fulfilling the requirements for membership of the PSC may submit its candidature, the rules on the election suggest that the selection of member states shall be conducted at the regional level. Yet, the level of follow up of this rule varies across different regions. While in the past most regions except Southern and West Africa finalize candidature for election in the PSC at regional level, for this year's election the AU Office of the Legal Counsel received the required number of candidates for all regions except East Africa. As in the past,

there was no consensus between members of the East Africa region on a single candidate for the election.

East African unsuccessful negotiations

When the elections were held on 8 February, the election of the PSC was postponed for one hour on the request of the East Africa region for finalizing the negotiations between the three countries, candidates for the PSC for East Africa region. Although negotiations started early and were underway in the days leading up to the summit, no breakthrough was achieved when the Executive Council was scheduled to hold the elections. Despite the delay of the elections and the last minute negotiations, no consensus was reached between the three countries. As a result, all the three candidates remained on the ballot for the elections.

Conduct and outcome of the elections The elections were held in line with the PSC Protocol and the Modalities on the Elections of the PSC. The conduct of the election followed the regional allocation of the seats of the PSC. In the election for the Central Africa region, the candidate (Burundi) received 42 votes, which is more votes than the 38 votes that Burundi received when it was elected to the PSC for two year term in 2016. Out of the 52 votes, there were 10 abstentions on the election of Burundi.

In the election for the two seats available for East Africa, Djibouti and Rwanda received 50 votes and 49 votes respectively. As with the elections for the Central Africa region, three abstentions were registered. For the seat allotted for Northern Africa, Algeria was elected with 48 votes and 4 abstentions. Southern Africa and West Africa candidates Lesotho and Nigeria received 49 votes and 2 abstentions and 46 votes and 3 abstentions respectively. For the East Africa regional election to the PSC, after five rounds of elections that saw Sudan's

withdrawal at the 4th round, Kenya was elected with 37 votes.

PSC members elected for the three-year term in February 2019 and the membership of the PSC from April 2019 are those represented below.

In terms of the criteria for the PSC elections, those that seem to apply fairly consistently relate to regional representation and, albeit unevenly, rotation. While there are a number of countries that served on the PSC more frequently since it has come into operation in 2004, Nigeria is the only country that has been on the PSC from 2004 to date.

Implications of the elections on the dynamics in the PSC

The result of the 2019 election of the 5 members of the PSC shows that AU member states opted for continuity. This is reflected in the re-election of two of the current members of the PSC. In terms of the dynamics of the PSC, the return of Algeria is the most notable development. Also of note is the election of Burundi. Other than the impact that these returning members could have on how certain conflict situations are dealt with, it is unlikely that the current dynamic in the PSC would change dramatically.