

# Provisional Program of Work for the Month of April 2024

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Date | April 2024

The Gambia will serve as the stand-in-chairperson of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of April 2024. According to the rules on rotation of the monthly chairperson of the PSC in alphabetical order (Article 8(6) of PSC Protocol & Rule 23 of the PSC Rules of Procedure), Nigeria was set to be the chairperson for April. However, due to the absence of ambassadorial representation, the typical alphabetical rotation could not be applied this month. Consequently, The Gambia have stepped in as the stand-in-chairperson, as provided under Paragraph 67 of the Manual on Working Methods of the Council.

The PSC's Provisional Programme of Work includes five substantive sessions and a 'field visit' to Abuja for the Abuja High- Level Meeting on Counterterrorism meeting. Two of the sessions will address region-specific issues, while the remaining three will cover thematic topics. All sessions are scheduled to be held at ambassadorial level.

The first session of the month scheduled to take place on 4 April will focus on hate crimes and fighting genocide ideology in Africa. The session also takes place within the framework of the 30<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. While the session is in line with PSC's [678<sup>th</sup> meeting](#) which decided to dedicate an open session to the theme every year in April, the commemoration is in accordance with the AU Assembly Decision [[Assembly/ AU / Dec.695](#)] of 2 July 2018 as well as the Communique of the PSC adopted at its [761<sup>st</sup> session](#).

The forthcoming session, on 'prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes' that has become a standing agenda item of the PSC may take stock of Rwanda's transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction journey and discuss the growing relevance of the lessons gleaned from the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. In the light of various large scale atrocities experienced in various conflict settings and the continuing violations to which civilians are subjected in various conflicts such as Sudan, the session is expected to underscore the urgency of maintaining vigilance in implementing the lessons from that unprecedented tragedy as institutionalized in the AU norms and peace and security architecture. It is also anticipated that the session will serve as an occasion for following up on some of the previous decisions of the PSC on this theme including most notably the call for the appointment of a special envoy on the prevention of genocide in Africa.

The second session of the month and the first region-specific session to be held on 8 April will be dedicated for the briefing on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin with regards to the operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) operations. The session is in accordance with the PSC's request for the Commission in coordination with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Secretariat, to report to Council regularly on the activities of the MNJTF, in line with the relevant provisions contained in the Communique PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) of 29 January 2015. The last time this issue was discussed was during the PSC's [1197<sup>th</sup> session](#) held on 30 January 2024. It is recalled that the session decided to renew MNJTF's mandate for one-year period, effective from 1 February 2024. It is also anticipated that the PSC will be briefed on the request it made during its previous session to the AU Commission and the LCBC to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) between AU, LCBC and MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). Furthermore, the session is also anticipated to assess

the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region (RSS) that was adopted in August 2018 by the LCBC and later endorsed by the PSC. The session is further expected to address Climate Change impacts in the region.

On the same day, the PSC will be briefed on the preparations for the high-level African Counter Terrorism Meeting in Abuja, scheduled for 22-23 April 2024. As part of these arrangements, the PSC has scheduled to participate in the event on 22 – 25 April. The meeting will take place under the theme 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa'. During this briefing, it is anticipated that PSC members will receive detailed information regarding the strategic objectives of the meeting, the agendas to be covered and the key stakeholders involved. The briefing may also delve into strategies to boost regional cooperation against the rising threat of terrorism, which could inform discussions of the high-level meeting. In a commendable development that should be replicated and regularized, as part of the 'field mission', the PSC is also expected to hold consultation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mediation and Security Council.

On 16 April, the PSC will hold its fourth session of the month, focusing on 'Unblocking the obstacles to the effective Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)'. This session aligns with the PSC's decision from its [1014<sup>th</sup> session](#) held on 26 July 2021, which called for quarterly briefings on emerging threats to peace and security in Africa. This request was directed towards the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA), the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL). These entities are expected to provide updates on emerging trends affecting the continent's peace and security landscape. On a particular note, the briefing is also

expected to address the persisting issues of terrorism, with focus on the Sahel region, in accordance with the communique adopted by the PSC during its [1170<sup>th</sup> session](#) on 22 August 2023.

The PSC will convene its next session on 18 April to explore the security conditions in the Gulf of Guinea and devise the required response to combat maritime insecurity and piracy.

The council last addressed this issue during its [1174<sup>th</sup> session](#) on September 18, 2023. During the session, recognizing a decade of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct's implementation, the PSC proposed its expansion to encompass the entire Atlantic coast. As such, the upcoming session will provide an opportunity for the PSC to review updated assessments of the Code's strategies and provisions. The session may receive an update on the progresses towards the operationalizing the Yaoundé Architecture's structure and the assessment as to whether it is adequately equipped to respond to emerging threats and realities.

The initial programme of work for the PSC is expected to expand with the addition of two more sessions. One of these sessions is expected to focus on the situation in Somalia/ATMIS, a topic last discussed in an informal consultation on 27 March 2024 upon the request of the Government of Somalia. This meeting was also in response to the Council's request during its [1173<sup>rd</sup> session](#) in September 2023, to develop a feasible exit strategy for ATMIS, which would include proposals for the AU's sustained support to Somalia beyond December 31, 2024. During the informal consultations, the PSC received updates on the completion of phase 2 drawdown, preparations for phase 3 and ongoing discussions regarding post-ATMIS security arrangements. Furthermore, it is recalled that, at the Somalia security conference held on 12 December 2023, in New York, Somalia requested a new, limited multilateral mission post-ATMIS, aiming to protect strategic population centers and crucial

infrastructure in Mogadishu and Federal Member State. As previously anticipated in our [insight](#) for the session on 8 March, detailed information on the proposed mission was expected and the 27 March informal briefing to the PSC provided some clarity on Somalia's perspective. Furthermore, Somalia's active involvement in ATMIS's drawdown and exit and in planning the post-ATMIS mission, were also part of discussion points. However, during the 8 March session the PSC members did not reach a definitive agreement on certain issues. Both the 27 March informal session and the session proposed for this month are based on UN Security Council Resolution 2710. It is recalled that the UNSC, under resolution 2710, requested the FGS and the AU to conduct a joint technical assessment by 31 March 2024 to evaluate phase 2 drawdown, and provide an update by 30 April on their preparations for phase 3 drawdown. Therefore, the upcoming session is expected to continue these discussions, with the goal of reaching consensus on the unresolved matters.

The other session that is expected to be included in the Council's programme is the situation in Sudan. It is anticipated that the session will review the developments in the war that will mark one year on 15 April since its outbreak in April 2023. The war has continued to rage on with devastating consequences to civilians with nearly 14,000 fatalities, 8.1 million displaced and 24.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, of which significant number facing imminent famine. In its [1185<sup>th</sup> session](#) convened back in November 2023, the PSC made the decision to establish 'a High-Level Ad Hoc Panel on Sudan.' This panel is tasked with collaborating with all Sudanese stakeholders to facilitate a civilian-led political transition. Accordingly, on 3 February 2024, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, announced the formation of this high-level panel. The panel, chaired by Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns, includes Dr. Specioza Wandira-Kazibwe, the former Vice President of Uganda, and

Ambassador Fransisco Madeira, the former Special Representative of the Chairperson to Somalia and former Head of ATMIS. Over the past two months, the panel undertook consultation tours which took the members of the Panel to Port Sudan and Cairo. The Panel has engaged with various stakeholders, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Expanded Mechanism for the Resolution of Sudan's crisis, and most recently, the Foreign Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Therefore, the PSC is expected to receive an updated briefing from the high-level panel on its consultations and plans for implementing the AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Crisis in Sudan.

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**\*Post-script:** The analytical briefing on strategic planning for Post-ATMIS in Somalia, scheduled for April, is now confirmed to occur on 3 April, following the flag ceremony for the newly elected members of the PSC, where they will install their flags at the PSC Chamber. The briefing will be held in a closed session, which will also include a separate session for the engagement between the PSC and the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

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