

Provisional Program of Work for the Month of February 2024

Provisional Program of Work for the Month of February 2024*

Date | February 2024

In February, Morocco takes over the role of chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) from Ghana. The PSC's Provisional Programme of Work of the month, prepared under Morocco's lead, includes twelve substantive sessions. This number is almost twice more than the average number of sessions held by the PSC on a monthly basis. Four of these sessions will address country-specific issues, while the remaining eight will cover thematic topics. Except for one ministerial-level session, all the sessions will be held at the ambassadorial level. Additionally, the Programme of Work also envisages that the PSC will convene an informal meeting for an exchange with countries in political transition.

The first session of the month taking place on 1 February will be on transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is a session for discussing trends regarding the use of transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding in Africa and the implementation of the AU Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) of 2019. As the most comprehensive and authoritative articulation of the principles, benchmarks and policy parameters for planning and implementing transitional justice processes, the AUTJP avails globally the most current legal and policy resources both for the pursuit of justice and reconciliation in post-conflict settings and for addressing the root causes and drivers of conflicts. By focusing on the AUTJP, this session contributes towards an enhanced understanding of the AUTJP and the enormous potential it

carries. In doing so, it will enable the AU and its member states to develop a context-specific comprehensive policy, strategy and programme toward democratic and socio-economic transformation, achieving sustainable peace, justice, reconciliation and social cohesion. The session may also serve as a platform to share experiences and best practices in the implementation of the TJP and provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of transitional justice in post-conflict peace-building initiatives.

On 5 February, the PSC will convene an Informal Consultation to provide an updated briefing on the countries in political transition, namely Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso. In 2023, the PSC implemented a new format to overcome limitations in engaging with member states suspended from AU activities. These consultations were held on 26 April 2023 and 21 December 2023, with representatives from Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan, as well as a representative of the Economic Commission for Western African States (ECOWAS). The purpose of these informal consultations was for the PSC to directly engage with member states suspended from AU activities and enable countries concerned with the opportunity to address challenges faced in implementing transitional roadmaps to return to constitutional order. In the upcoming informal engagement, the PSC may address the recent joint statement by Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali announcing their withdrawal from ECOWAS.

On 7 February, the PSC will address the intersection of health, peace and security on the continent. The PSC has previously convened sessions to discuss various aspects of health peace and security, including public health threats and pandemics, such as Ebola and COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the complex societal impacts of health crises and how they exacerbate existing peace and security challenges. Building on these experiences, the upcoming session on the 7th may assess the interlinkage between health and security,

pandemic preparedness and response, humanitarian impacts of health crises, international collaboration and partnerships. Importantly, this also provides an opportunity to address issues around the protection of healthcare facilities, professionals and humanitarians, considering the disastrous attacks on healthcare infrastructures that became apparent in the ongoing war in Sudan. Additionally, the session could serve as an opportunity for the PSC to explore the role of health diplomacy exemplified by Africa CDC's delivery of assistance for Sudan, the involvement of peacekeeping missions in health security and discuss prevention and early warning systems.

On 9 February, the Council's session will hold two country-specific agenda items. The first part will provide the PSC with an update on the current situation in Gabon. Following the coup that took place on 30 August 2023 in Gabon, the PSC convened two meetings. The first meeting (1172nd) resulted in the suspension of Gabon from all AU activities until the restoration of constitutional order, while the second meeting (1180th) assessed the political progress made since the coup. During the 1180th session, the Council expressed concern regarding the delay and the lack of a clear, practical and time-bound timetable for a transition, especially regarding national dialogue processes and elections. There are, however, some developments that took place following the PSC's last session, including the announcement of a deadline for a transition, which is set for August 2025 with the holding of general elections. Furthermore, a national dialogue is scheduled for April 2024 and the development of a new constitution is planned for December 2024. The PSC is expected to monitor the progress concerning the transition process, particularly developments in relation to the national dialogue and the development of the new constitution. Additionally, as a follow-up from PSC's 1172nd session, the AU Commission is expected to update the Council on the deployment of a high-

level mission to Gabon.

The second agenda, expected to be discussed on 9 February, marks PSC's first session of the year on the situation in Sudan. This session comes against the recent announcement by the AU Commission Chair on the appointment of three individuals to make up the AU High-Level Panel effective as of 17 January. During the PSC last [convening on Sudan](#) in 2023, the PSC made two forthcoming requests to the AU Commission, one to expedite the two-stage political dialogue process with the support of IGAD and in alignment with the AU and IGAD Roadmap and two, the request for the Commission to set up a High-Level Ad hoc Panel on Sudan. It is anticipated that this session will address three key developments on the situation in Sudan since the start of the year, namely, the appointment on the AU High-Level Panel by the AU Commission per the request from the PSC; the [key outcomes](#) on Sudan from the 42nd IGAD Summit held on 18 January; and the impact of the announcement by the [Sudanese government to suspend its membership](#) and sever ties with IGAD, the regional body in the process of facilitating a convening between the conflict actors in Sudan.

On 12 February, the PSC will convene a session for the commemoration of the International Day against the use of child soldiers. The meeting will provide an opportunity to reflect on the trends on the continent regarding the recruitment and use of child soldiers, the challenges faced and progress made in preventing recruitment of children. It is also expected that the meeting will include discussions on reviewing the current status of efforts deployed by the AU Commission to prevent the use of child soldiers in Africa; share best practices and successful initiatives in demobilizing and rehabilitating former child soldiers; identify areas for enhanced collaboration and coordination among member states, RECs/RMs and other relevant stakeholders and lastly explore strategies to strengthen advocacy and raise

awareness about the plight of child soldiers.

It is to be recalled that last time Morocco chaired the PSC, this theme also formed part of the agenda of the monthly program of the PSC and is expected to build on the outcome of that 1105th session of the PSC. This session will also build on the last PSC ministerial and high-level open session on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children in situations of conflict which was held on 4 and 5 December 2023 and adopted the [Banjul Conclusions](#).

The only ministerial session of the PSC for the month will be held on 16 February on 'Connectivity: the path to strengthening peace, security and integration in the Sahel'. Considering previous years' sessions, it is worth noting that the PSC held several individual sessions on the countries in the Sahel region but only managed to dedicate one session on the Sahel in 2023. Apart from last year's session, the ministerial session is expected to also build on the 1116th session of the PSC on the Sahel which was also held during Morocco's Chairship of the PSC. Among others, the issues expected to be addressed during the session include the continuing threat of terrorism affecting the countries of the region, the adverse impact of the deepening geopolitical tension involving various outside powers, and the progress in the transitional processes for restoration of constitutional rule in the countries of the Sahel as well as how to provide coordinated support to the countries.

On 21 February, the Council is expected to convene a session on the Peace, security and development nexus: follow-up to the Tangier's Conference. This in accordance with the Conclusions of the [Tangier Declaration](#) of 2022 adopted during the 1134th PSC session, in which the PSC was urged to consider convening an annual Council session. The session is expected to give an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the

Declaration, ahead of the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government.

On 23 February, the PSC will convene on migration as a stand-alone item for the first time since 2018. Since 2018, the PSC convened on various thematic issues that intersect with migration including its [session on xenophobic violence on African Migrants in South Africa](#) and its most recent convening during its [1081st session](#) commemorating 30 years of cooperation between the AU and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) where among other issues of concern, migrations was significantly covered. Due to the PSC's hiatus on session solely addressing migrations, this session provides an opportunity to re-engage the issues of migration in relations to development and peace and security holistically. The last convening of the PSC held on migration as a stand-alone agenda item was during its [782nd session](#) where the PSC highlighted key outcomes that may be revisited in the upcoming session. These include the revision of the migration policy framework and the development of a plan of action between 2018-2023; the establishment of various platforms for intel sharing among member states regarding migration (i.e, establishment of the Regional Operational Centre in Khartoum, the Continental study Centre for Migration, Research and Data in Mali and the Observatory for Migration in Morocco). More recently, during the PSC session commemorating the cooperation between the AU and ICRC, the PSC also noted the production of a report on the 'registration and documentation of vulnerable populations in Africa' in collaboration with AU, regional and international actors which may also be revisited during the upcoming session. Other key developments on the issues of migration that may be a point of discussion during the PSC session may also comprise the outcome from the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons which took place in May 2022. The objective of the It is also expected that the African Migration Observatory, the Rabat-based AU body, is

expected to provide a briefing as well.

On 27 February, the PSC will hold its session with two agenda items. The first agenda item that will be discussed by the PSC is the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR). During the PSC's 1157th session on 13 June 2023, discussions were held regarding the status of the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR (PAPR-CAR). The discussions highlighted the challenges posed by the illicit proliferation of arms in CAR, which is connected to the war in Sudan, as well as the disagreements among CAR's political stakeholders in organizing a constitutional referendum. Considering the hindrance of these challenges on the full implementation of the PAPR, the PSC is expected to examine the current political and security challenges on the implementation of the agreement. One area that was not addressed during the 1157th meeting was the update on the status of drawdown of the AU Military Observer Mission to CAR (MOUACA). Therefore, it is expected that the upcoming session on the 27th will provide an opportunity for the PSC to review the progress made in incorporating MOUACA's mandate into the AU Mission in CAR. Additionally, it is expected that an assessment of the AU Mission in CAR's capacity to execute its responsibilities will also be conducted during the session.

In addition to its briefing on the situation in the CAR, the second agenda item of the PSC's session on 27 February is the agenda of terrorism and violent extremism (TVE). The last convening of the PSC held on TVE in 2023 was centered around the AU Commission's Report on Countering Terrorism in Africa. Key outcomes from that session that may be featured in this session include the request from the PSC to expedite the establishment of the AU Ministerial Committee on Counter-Terrorism (AUCCT), the Coordination Task Force (A2CTF), and the operationalization of the PSC Sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism. In alignment with recent findings by [Amani Africa's special research report](#), the PSC took key decisions that aim

to take a holistic approach to addressing the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism. This includes its decision to establish an annual roundtable on alternative approaches to counter and prevent violent extremism. A follow-up on this decision is also expected to feature in this session.

On 28 February, the PSC will convene a session with two agenda items at the ambassadorial level. The first session will be discussions on the AU election observation, a lever for better governance through lessons learned. AU election observation mission reports have shown that the majority of electorates across the continent have been receptive to the deployment of election observation missions, although the contribution of these missions for clean elections remains a subject of major contestation.

The last agenda item of the session and the program of the month will be on the political situation in South Sudan. The country is slated for general elections at the end of the transitional period in December 2024 despite major remaining tasks. According to a recent [Report](#) by the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), it is premised that due to the insufficient funding for the unification of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) and the ineffective functioning of the agreement mechanisms and institutions including the National Elections Commission, National Constitutional Review Commission and Political Parties Council, the country will continue to struggle with the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), in which the ripple effect will be felt in the holding of elections in December. In addition, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan remains dire. The impact of the conflict in Sudan has worsened the existing humanitarian crisis in the country, in addition to inter-communal conflicts, with the influx of Sudanese refugees and South Sudanese returnees who had sought refuge in Sudan amidst dwindling support from humanitarian

actors. The convening of this PSC session will give an opportunity for Council to get an update on the aforementioned issues.

***Post-script:** The PSC Provisional Programme of Work for February as initially adopted has been revised. As per the Rev 1 of the Program, the following changes have been made.

Items indicated in the original program that have since been removed are:

- Informal session on exchange with countries in political transitions scheduled for 5 Feb 2023
- Briefing on the situation in the Republic of Gabon scheduled for 9 Feb 2023
- The situation on the Republic of Sudan scheduled for 9 Feb 2023
- Migration: the co-development approach to reinforce peace and security in the continent scheduled for 16 Feb 2023
- AU Elections observation, a lever of better governance through lessons learned scheduled for 29 Feb 2023

The dates and agenda items of the various sessions to be held starting 6 February are as follows:

- Transitional justice and post-conflict peacebuilding now scheduled for 6 Feb 2023
- Health security and the promotion of peace and security in the continent now scheduled for 8 Feb 2023
- Peace, security and development nexus: follow-up to the Tangier's Conference scheduled for 21 Feb 2023
- Fighting against Terrorism and violent extremism scheduled for 23 Feb 2023
- Commemoration of the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers scheduled for 27 Feb 2023

- Update on the situation in the Republic of South Sudan scheduled for 27 Feb 2023

Amani Africa wishes to express its gratitude to the Australian Embassy in Ethiopia for the support in the production of this Insight on the Monthly Programme of Work of the AU Peace and Security Council