

Provisional Programme of Work of the PSC for the Month of April 2021

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In April, Djibouti will be the interim chair of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). As indicated in the monthly programme of the PSC, four substantive sessions are planned to be convened during the month. Three of these will be country/region specific, whereas one will be a thematic session. One of the sessions will be an open session. As has been the norm since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, all PSC meetings during April will be conducted virtually.

The first session of the month, scheduled to take place on 12 April, is expected to be an open session on the theme “hate crimes and fighting genocide ideology in Africa”. This will be Council’s fourth session on the same theme, the last one having taken place in 2019, at its 836th meeting. It is to be recalled that at its 761st session, Council decided to designate 7 April of each year as the African Union Day of Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 72/550. The coming session represents a follow up to the 678th session of the PSC of April 2017, in which Council decided to convene, annually in April, a PSC open session on the prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa.

The second session is expected to take place on 13 April and will be committed to consideration of reports of PSC’s field missions to South Sudan and Sudan. The PSC conducted its field visit to South Sudan from 24 to 26 March, and to Sudan from 30 March to 1 April. In addition to reflecting on the elements of the reports, Council may also highlight key developments such

as the signing of the Declaration of Principles between the Transitional Government of Sudan and SPLM-North, and the increasing reports of attacks in various provinces in South Sudan, particularly Eastern Equatoria where 14 civilians were killed only as of last week.

On 15 April, PSC will consider and adopt its programme of work for May, which will be circulated via email to all members of Council for comments and feedback. The PSC programme of work also envisages that Council members will have a meeting on the 15th of April to prepare for PSC retreat expected to take place in May. It is to be recalled that the PSC planned to conduct its retreat virtually, from 25-26 February which was then postponed.

The next meeting scheduled to take place on 20 April will focus on a preparation for Council's activities and budget for the year 2022. The meeting is also envisaged to include a discussion on the agreement of strategic priorities on the utilisation of AU Peace Fund. This will be conducted in the context of a follow up to the Joint PSC Board of Trustees Retreat of January 2020.

On 22 April, the PSC is expected to convene its third substantive session which will be consideration of the situation in Abyei and the future of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), in light of UNSC Resolution 2550(2020). Resolution 2550(2020) renewed the mandate of UNISFA until 15 May 2021. At its 966th session where the PSC last considered the situation in Abyei, it underscored the importance of the continued presence of UNISFA, in light of the security fragility and increasing incidents of violence in the area. Having regard to the approaching deadline for UNISFA's expiry of mandate, the session presents an opportunity for the PSC to provide guidance to the A3 on the consideration by the UNSC of UNISFA's mandate in May. In addition, the upcoming session may also serve the PSC to follow up on some of the key decisions

adopted at its previous session, such as its request for the AU Commission (AUC) Chair to despatch a sensitisation mission comprising representatives from AUC; AU High- Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP); UN & UNISFA to Abyei, in the context of developing modalities for the release of the report on the killing of Chief Koul Deng Koul.

The last session of the month and the fourth substantive session of the PSC is scheduled to take place on 27 April and will be committed to a discussion on the AU Human Rights and Military Observers Mission in Burundi. The last time the PSC addressed the situation in Burundi was in 2018. At its 808th session, Council expressed its plan to maintain the Human Rights and Military Observers Mission in Burundi in order to ensure support to the Government and the people of the country, particularly as the 2020 election approached. Following the 2020 election in Burundi which was concluded peacefully, the UNSC has struck off the country from its political agenda. The session will take stock of the work of the Human Rights and Military Observers Mission in Burundi and decide on next steps.