

The PSC during April 2020

Automatic Heading TextDate | April 2020

Kenya takes over from Equatorial Guinea the role of the monthly chairpersonship of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of April. Although a draft provisional program of work of the PSC for April was being finalized, it has become impossible to proceed with the draft program of work that was being finalized due to the decision to freeze the holding of physical meetings until the end of April in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID19).

The term of office of the ten members of the PSC serving for two years term since 2018 has come to an end on 31 March 2020. Below is the list of these outgoing members of the PSC from which Djibouti will remain in the PSC as a member of the PSC re-elected during the February 2020 AU Summit.

Table 1 PSC members whose two-year term ended on 31 March 2020

Region	States whose term ends in 2020
Central Africa	Equatorial Guinea and Gabon
Eastern Africa	Djibouti and Rwanda
Northern Africa	Morocco
Southern Africa	Angola and Zimbabwe
Western Africa	Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo

The ten newly elected and returning members of the PSC have assumed their role as members of the PSC as of 1 April 2020. See below in table 2 the list of the members of the PSC starting their two-year term from 1 April.

Table 2 PSC members whose two-year term starts on

1 April

Region	States whose term ends in April 2020
Central Africa	Cameroon and Chad
Eastern Africa	Djibouti and Ethiopia
Northern Africa	Egypt
Southern Africa	Malawi and Mozambique
Western Africa	Benin, Ghana and Senegal

Due to the disruption of PSC activities because of COVID19, the reintroduction of the new members to the work of the PSC as observers during March 2020 and through the convening of an induction retreat scheduled to take place in Maputo has not been possible. Apart from getting introduced to the work of the PSC and its working methods electronically and in the course of participating in the activities of the PSC, the new members will also have to adjust to the improvisation required in the method of work of the PSC during the period which the PSC could not hold meetings physically.

The ordinary conduct of PSC's work through the regular convening of meetings physically will not take place as envisaged in Article 8 of the PSC Protocol and the 2004 Rules of Procedure of the PSC (PSC Rules). It is however expected that the PSC will continue to conduct essential functions on account of the continuous nature of its mandate pursuant to Articles 2 and 8 of the PSC Protocol. Notwithstanding the provisions of the PSC Protocol and the PSC Rules on the conduct of business of the PSC under normal circumstances via physical meetings, these instruments and the Working Methods do not prohibit the PSC from conducting its business through working modalities other than meeting physically.

Accordingly, although much of the activities envisaged in the draft program of work of the PSC that was under finalization before the interruption by the COVID19 pandemic including the annual session on genocide and hate crimes could no longer be

undertaken, the PSC is improvising to avoid the total freezing of its work including by focusing on essential works. Pursuant to the Manual on the PSC Working Methods, there is a list of mandatory/statutory meetings, which are reflected in the Annual Indicative Work Plan that the PSC is required to conduct. These include what are known as technical rollovers, which are related to the renewal of mandates of PSC mandated or PSC authorized missions.

The PSC is required to renew the mandate of such missions to ensure that they continue to function and that they have the legal basis for continuing to operate. During April, the PSC is expected to renew the mandate of the G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, which was extended in 2019 until 11 April 2020.

The PSC will also continue to monitor the peace and security landscape on the continent to respond to new or emerging situations. It is to be recalled that the PSC during its last meeting on COVID-19, the 915th session, has requested to be briefed regularly on the fight against COVID-19. In the light of the concerns around the dire socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges arising from the measures that countries are adopting, how the pandemic affects countries/regions experiencing conflict and risks of social tensions are issues deserving of PSC's attention as a follow up to its 915th session.

It is expected that for purposes of these activities the PSC will resort to existing electronic medium of communication by adapting and building on the provisions in the Manual on the PSC Working Methods on silence procedure.