

The Situation in Sudan

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Tomorrow (20 October), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1179th session to consider the situation in Sudan.

Following opening remarks by Daniel Owassa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for October 2023, Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) is expected to make a statement. Mohamed el Hacen Lebatt, Principal Strategic Adviser to the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Special Envoy to Sudan and Mohamed Belaiche, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC) in Sudan are also expected to deliver statements. In addition, a representative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is also expected to make remarks on the situation in the country under consideration.

The meeting is being convened as an additional agenda item in October's provisional programme of work for the activities of the PSC. The last time the PSC convened a meeting to consider the situation in Sudan was during its 1156th session held at the Heads of State and Government level on 27 May 2023, whereby a [Communiqué](#) was adopted as an outcome document. In the Communiqué, the Heads of State and Government adopted the ***African Union Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan***, towards silencing the guns in Sudan, and called on Sudanese stakeholders and the international community to support the implementation of the Roadmap.

On 31 May 2023, the [3rd Meeting](#) of the Expanded Mechanism for the Resolution of the Sudan Conflict was convened. The meeting, which was chaired by Professor Mohamed El-Hacen

Lebatt, Spokesperson for the AU Process for Sudan, presented to the members of the Expanded Mechanism the outcomes of the 1156th PSC Meeting as well as the next steps towards an inclusive, Sudanese-owned process, that would end the fighting and put Sudan on the path to a democratic, civilian-led government. In addition, the Expanded Mechanism welcomed the Jeddah Process, facilitated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America, which resulted in the Declaration of Commitments and the Short-term Ceasefire and Humanitarian Assistance Arrangement.

In alignment with [the Expanded Mechanism's commitment to convene the Core Group](#), the AU held its inaugural meeting with the [Core Group of the Expanded Mechanism on 2 June 2023](#) to fine-tune the modalities of the implementation of the roadmap and settle on concrete steps for a ceasefire. The final outcomes of this convening have yet to be released.

Tomorrow's meeting will provide an opportunity for the PSC to deliberate on the progress made towards the implementation of the adopted Roadmap during the 1156th meeting. This includes the following six elements outlined in the Roadmap:

- i. Establishment of a coordination mechanism to ensure all efforts by the regional and global actors are harmonized and impactful;
- ii. Immediate, permanent, inclusive and comprehensive cessation of hostilities;
- iii. Effective humanitarian response;
- iv. Protection of civilians and civil infrastructure;
- v. Strategic role of neighboring states and the region; and
- vi. Resumption of a credible and inclusive political transition process, that takes into account the contributory role of all Sudanese political and social actors, as well as the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement, towards a democratic civilian-led government.

As the conflict in the country between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) passed its sixth month, tomorrow's meeting is also expected to give an insight into the recent joint AU-IGAD delegation meeting with Sudanese political and civilian groups. The delegation met with the democratic Bloc, allied groups in Cairo, and the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) to initiate a political process to end the ongoing conflict and establish new constitutional arrangements to reinstate civilian governance.

The 14th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government was also held on Monday, 12 June 2023, in Djibouti, the Republic of Djibouti, where it adopted the ***IGAD Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of Sudan***. The action points from the Roadmap included:

- Include the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as the fourth member of the IGAD High-Level Delegation for the Peace Process in the Republic of Sudan; and for H.E. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya, to Chair the Quartet Countries of the Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan and for the Quartet to work in close coordination with the African Union Commission;
- Within ten days, the Quartet to arrange a face-to-face meeting between H.E. Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the Chairperson of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan, and Gen. Muhammad Hamdan Dagalo in one of the regional capitals;
- Within two weeks secure a commitment from the leadership of SAF and RSF to establish a humanitarian corridor;
- Within three weeks initiate an inclusive political process towards a political settlement of the conflict in the Republic of Sudan.

Since its initial convening, IGAD has hosted consecutive meetings in alignment with its roadmap. On 10 July 2023, IGAD Heads of State and Government held a meeting at the level of

Quartet to address the implementation of the roadmap. The session explored substantial options including a request to the East African Standby Force to convene a meeting on the options of deployment for the protection of civilians. The meeting also recognized the supplementary role neighboring states have taken with the initiative to convene on 13 July 2023 in Egypt to address peace and stability in the Republic of Sudan in alignment with the IGAD Roadmap. Finally, a significant decision was made to ensure measures are taken for the facilitation of immediate humanitarian assistance. However, the decision to ensure humanitarian access was not revisited during the [second IGAD Quartet Group meeting](#) that recently took place on 6 September 2023. The second IGAD Quartet Group meeting instead emphasized the need for an all-inclusive consultation of civilian actors that will yield a more structured approach to peace dialogue and as such mandated IGAD and the AU to expedite the consultation process.

Despite the existence of such various mechanisms and initiatives, currently there is no meaningful processes for addressing the situation. The ceasefire process has stalled. Thus, after nearly a dozen mediated or declared ceasefire initiatives, the very process for ceasefire has been suspended. Neither the IGAD process nor that of the AU has also led to any meaningful wider peace or political process. There are two issues arising from this state of affair. The first is the existence of multiple initiatives and absence of a common platform around which all actors rally. The second concerns the fact that there is no dedicated mechanism that works on a full-time basis on the war on Sudan, for example, along the lines proposed by President Museveni when he Chair the PSC last May on Sudan – establishment of a high-level facilitator or panel of facilitators.

These various processes failed to do anything more than meeting and adopting statements or communiqués. None managed to mitigate or in any way make a dent on the war. The result

of the inadequacies of these various and poorly coordinated processes is that the war is allowed to continue to rage on, with no end in sight. Neither the AU nor IGAD are able to put in place or initiate a mechanism to also address and ameliorate the worsening humanitarian crisis.

The war has claimed the lives of nearly 10,000 people. Over 5.8 million have been internally displaced. 1.2 million people have fled to neighboring countries as refugees. Apart from this, humanitarian actors are able to reach to and deliver humanitarian assistance to only 3 percent of the more than 18 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The war also continues to involve not only indiscriminate attacks on civilians but also cause enormous destruction on civilian infrastructure. The country continues to fragment and Sudan is risking if not already experiencing state collapse. Apart from the suffering this creates to Sudanese, it creates vacuum, which if not urgently addressed, may be exploited by war economy entrepreneurs including terrorist groups.

One of the focus of tomorrow's session could be receiving feedback on where the various processes stand and whether there is now an opening for a meaningful peace process based on the engagement with the various civilian groupings. Additionally, it would be of particular interest for members of the PSC to get a dedicated mechanism that monitors, documents and reports on the humanitarian situation and facilitates civilian protection and compliance by warring parties with international humanitarian law.

The anticipated outcome of tomorrow's session is a Communique. It is expected that Council will call on members of the international community, including the immediate neighbors of Sudan, to continue to demonstrate solidarity by assisting Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers, among others, by facilitating expeditious and dignified processes, conditions of entry, transit and reception of refugees from Sudan in line with the provisions of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the

1969 Kampala Convention. It may also underscore the growing humanitarian toll resulting from the conflict in Sudan, urge conflicting parties to observe the fundamental rules and principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law underpinning the protection of civilians and appeal to the international community to redouble efforts geared towards ensuring effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected communities. In this respect, the PSC may specifically call on the parties to end indiscriminate attacks against civilians. The PSC may further emphasise the importance of consolidating efforts and creating better coherence between the various initiatives put underway to manage the crisis in Sudan. It may also call for the establishment of a joint high-level panel on Sudan by the AU, IGAD and the UN.