

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

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MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC – AUGUST 2021

THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

During August, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) convened a total of eight substantive sessions under the chairship of Cameroon.¹ Out of these, one was convened at ministerial level while the remaining were held at ambassadorial level. Of the total substantive sessions convened during the month, two addressed country specific situations whereas the remaining six focused on thematic issues.



FIG 1: LEVEL AND TYPE OF SESSIONS

Throughout the month, many changes were introduced to the initial programme of work of the month. This includes the postponement of three of the sessions that were planned to take place in August,² and the introduction of two sessions which were not part of the initial programme for the month.³

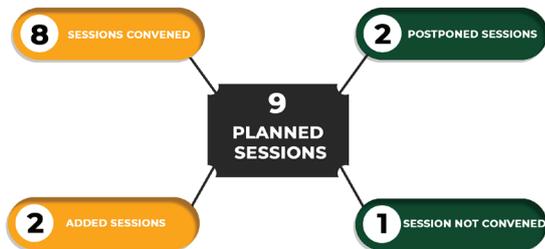


FIG 2: PROGRAMME OF WORK PATTERN

¹ In August 2021, Cameroon was serving in the PSC for the fourth time since the establishment of the Council. So far, Cameroon has served in the Council for two-year terms from 2004-2006; 2006-2008; 2012-2014; and 2020-2022. Following its re-election in the 2022 election of PSC member States, Cameroon is currently serving for a three-year term for the first time.

² Council's session on the situation in Mali was planned to take place on 6 August and later postponed for 2 September. A session on the theme of 'Elections in Africa' which was planned to take place on 12 August was re-scheduled to 23 September and a session on Commemoration of Amnesty Month which was scheduled for 31 August postponed to 8 September.

³ The session on AU Support to member States in transition and post-conflict situations was initially part of Council's programme of work for July but took place on 5 August instead. At the end of the month, Council also convened to address the situation in Somalia, in light of escalating political tensions in the country, and although the possibility of convening a session on Somalia was indicated in the Monthly Programme of Work for August as TBC, the session was not part of Council's confirmed agenda for the month. Although not a substantive session, another addition to Council's agenda was a meeting to discuss Council's budget for 2022, a discussion initially planned to take place in July.

The release of outcome documents took about 23 days on average. One of the sessions convened during the month did not have a publicly available outcome document.⁴ The remaining outcome documents of sessions convened during the month were adopted in the forms of communiqué, press statement and joint communiqué.

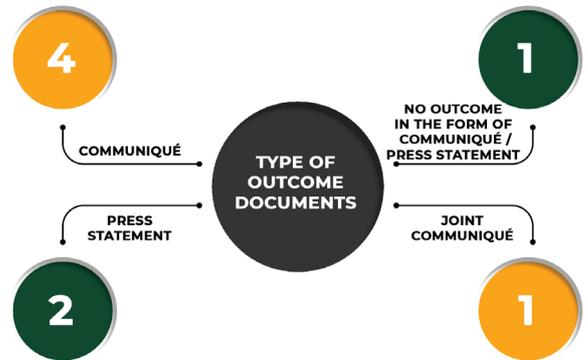


FIG 3: TYPE OF OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

It was also interesting to note that as previous months of 2021, particularly July, the balance of thematic sessions over country specific sessions has shown increase during August. Some of August's thematic sessions were also able to address multiple country specific conflicts and crises which share similar areas of thematic concerns. For example, the 1017th session dedicated to the theme "AU Support to Member States in Political Transition and Post-Conflict Situations" simultaneously discussed post-conflict situations and complex political transitions in member States such as the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Gambia, Lesotho and Somalia. Similarly, Council's consultative meetings convened during the month also served to address country and region-specific concerns, like that of the second consultative meeting of the PSC and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) convened on 26 August, which captured and reflected on political transitions in the continent such as Chad's.

⁴ Council's session on the situation in Somalia which took place on 31 August had no outcome document by way of statement or communiqué.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL TRANSITION IN CHAD ON THE AFRICAN UNION SUPPORT MECHANISM (AUSM)

Convened on 3 August, the session constituted Council's 1016th meeting. The outcome of the session was adopted in the form of a [Communiqué](#), released almost a month after convening.

Some of the main progresses obtained in Chad's political transition at the time were highlighted by Council. The process for the formation of a National Transitional Council (NTC) was among the progresses noted. It is to be recalled that one of the conditions Council set at its 996th session for Chad's transitional authorities to meet was the formation of a NTC. The NTC is now formed through a process which includes the formation of the Committee of TMC leadership and representatives of main political opposition with the task of appointing the 93 members of the national council.

Another condition Council highlighted at that session was the revision of the Transitional Charter which was drafted by Chad's military and commitment by the transitional authorities not to take part in the elections to be conducted at the end of the 18 months transitional period. Among the concerning contents of the Charter, the main ones relate to the lack of a rule excluding transitional authorities from participating in the elections to be held at the end of the transition period, allowance for extending the transitional process for another 18 months, and in general, the near unlimited power it grants to the Military Transitional Council (MTC), particularly the chairman, Mahamat Idriss Déby. At the 1016th session, although Council made a call for the transition period not to be extended beyond 18 months and reiterated its call for members of the MTC not to be candidates at the end of the transition period, it failed to make reference to the Transitional Charter, the revision of which still remains central to addressing these and other challenges such as the concentration of too much power in the MTC.

Council also welcomed the appointment of Basile Ikouébé as AU Special Envoy. Ikouébé is already the AU High Representative to Chad and Head of the AU Office in Ndjamen, as well as the preferred choice of Chad's MTC to provide support in the transition process. It is important to note that Ikouébé's appointment came following the MTC's rejection of Senegalese Ibrahima Fall as AU's Special Envoy, a background which indicates either the apparent undue encroachment of the MTC in the prerogative of the AU or lack of adequate consultations by the AU Commission in appointing its envoy. On the other hand, the appointment of Babagana Kingibe by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) as the Special Envoy of the Commission to Chad, which was also welcomed by Council, could present the opportunity for the two envoys to work in collaboration.

In terms of concerns, two main issues stood out. The first one relates to the border incident of June 2021 between Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR). The incident which involved the killing of at least six Chadian soldiers and three Russians on a military mission to assist CAR had invoked fear of deteriorated diplomatic relations between the two States. As noted by Council however, the deployment of joint efforts between the government of CAR and the transitional authorities of Chad to investigate the incidence further gives hope to resolve the issue through collaboration while avoiding the possibility of damage to the diplomatic relation of the two.

The other concern Council focused on was the continued presence of mercenaries and foreign fighters in Chad, particularly those coming from Libya. The issue of spread of foreign fighters from Libya to the wider Sahel region and the rest of the continent has lately gained much attention not only at the level of the AU but also the UN Security Council. While the October 2020 ceasefire agreement signed among Libyan parties stipulates for the withdrawal of foreign fighters from the country in three months' period, there is by far no clarity on how their withdrawal is to be managed, including where they will be headed and what measures need to be taken in order to ensure that they are fully disarmed. These and other pressing concerns will have significant impact on regional security, including in Chad. In light of that, **the AU Commission was requested** by Council to expedite finalisation of the AU Policy Paper on addressing potential impact of withdrawal of foreign troops and

mercenaries from Libya on the Central Africa and Sahel regions and submit it for approval by PSC.

With regards to the AUSM, having noted the efforts of the mission, a call was made by Council for partners and member States to continue their support to the mission. European Union (EU)'s commitment of 3 million Euros under the EU Early Response Mechanism (ERM)⁵ was welcomed in connection with that and the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee on General Supervision and Coordination on Budgetary, Financial and Administrative Matters was requested to consider and approve the proposal for supplementary funding of the AUSM through the EU ERM.

It is also worth noting the importance of clarity on the nature and mandates of the AUSM. At its 996th session where Council requested the AU Commission Chairperson to establish the AUSM, it underscored the purpose of the mechanism would be to "facilitate and coordinate the efforts of the AU High Representative and interested development partners, towards providing comprehensive and sustained support to the transition process in Chad". It emerges from this that this is a political mission of the AU that will contribute towards ensuring that the transition accomplishes its objectives. In the light of the circumstances that triggered the transition including the seizure of power by the military as opposed to the process of succession provided for in the Constitution upon the demise of the incumbent President and the suspension of the Constitution, AUSM's value addition lies in its ability to facilitate the initiation and implementation of key reform measures that will ensure that similar constitutional crisis facilitating the seizure of power by the army (coup) would not occur again. These reform measures include guarantees for the institutional independence and effective functioning of the legislative and judicial arms of government through separation of powers and checks and balances, and security sector reform that ensures non-interference of the military in politics. It is also critical that AUSM ensures that the requirements that the AU in accordance with its norms and practice set including the non-participation of the leadership

⁵ *The ERM is a quick response funding mechanism which utilises immediately available funds to prevent and manage violent conflict or to support peacebuilding efforts. The funds are made available to the AU and concerned RECs/RMs so that they can react to evolving crisis in a timely manner. The mechanism is coordinated within the framework of the African Peace Facility (APF), which is a key EU financial instrument supporting cooperation with Africa in the area of peace and security.*

and members of the MTC in elections that will be held at the end of the transition.

AU SUPPORT TO MEMBER STATES IN TRANSITION AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

The second PSC session convened during August was a thematic session focusing on AU's support to member States that are undergoing transitions and in post-conflict situations. This is the first time for the Council to convene a session on this theme. The outcome of the session which took place on 5 August and formed Council 1017th meeting was adopted as a [Communiqué](#) released on the same day.

Among the main highlights of the session was the emphasis Council placed on the adaption of peacebuilding efforts to new and emerging challenges, mentioning climate change and public health emergencies among the examples of such challenges. In light of the various challenges climate change and health pandemics such as Covid-19 and Ebola continue to impose on peace and security on the continent, it is important to incorporate mechanisms for addressing such challenges in post-conflict and transitional phases.

Another point emphasised in the Communiqué of the session is the importance of collaboration and coordination among all actors which provide support to member States in transition and post-conflict phase. The full operationalisation of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Centre in Cairo could play an instrumental role in this regard, by undertaking the coordination role and thereby ensuring that efforts are not duplicated. The contribution of development agencies to transitional efforts was also among the points highlighted by Council. It will be important therefore for the AUPCRD to ensure collaboration with development agencies including those in the private sector.

In addition to noting the Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin area and the Stabilization Strategy for Sahel region as approaches that should be used as examples, Council also called for the reactivation of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD. With regards to the Sub-Committee on PCRD,

is to be recalled that at its 958th session Council tasked “the PSC Committee of Experts to work on the terms of reference and time frames for the re-activation of the Sub-Committee, and submit for consideration by the PSC”. PSC’s call for re-activation of the PCRCD Sub-Committee was also implementing one of the conclusions agreed at the 13th PSC Retreat, to reactivate subordinate organs of the Council.

ANNUAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING BETWEEN THE PSC AND AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

On 10 August, Council convened its 1019th session which was dedicated to the third annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR). The outcome of the meeting was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

One of the interesting notes highlighted in the outcome document is the need to operationalise all applicable modalities for further enhancing cooperation and collaboration between the PSC and the ACHPR. Some of the modalities for collaboration and coordination underscored at the inaugural meeting of the PSC and ACHPR which took place in 2019, at Council’s 866th session include undertaking joint visits to conflict affected or post conflict African States; communicating conflict related decisions with human rights bearings; and for the ACHPR to brief the PSC regularly on human rights issues. Hence, in addition to the annual consultative meetings convened between the PSC and ACHPR, there are more avenues the two can explore in bringing better coordination of their respective mandates. The call made by Council under paragraph six of the Communiqué are also essential in giving effect to the modalities of collaboration identified at the inaugural meeting.

A collaboration between the PSC and ACHPR to identify human rights issues which could escalate into conflict or crisis situations could highly contribute to the continent’s early warning mechanism as envisaged in the communiqué. A good example for this could be the recently witnessed recurrence of coups in various countries on the continent. In some of these States

such as Guinea, among the major underlying reasons which initiated the coup has been violation of human rights standards, particularly civil and political rights. A joint action between the PSC and ACHPR to determine and engage with member States that have shown regress in respect for human rights could for instance contribute towards averting the possibility of crises such as unconstitutional changes of governments.

ICRC BRIEFING TO THE PSC

On 17 August, Council convened its 1022nd session to receive briefing from the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer, on the activities of the ICRC in Africa. The outcome of the session was adopted as a [Press Statement](#).

Council has been receiving briefings from the ICRC on a regular basis since 2007. At these briefings, the ICRC presents Council the activities it has been undertaking in various parts of the continent. At the recent briefing, Mr. Maurer highlighted some of pressing contemporary challenges in the delivery of humanitarian aid in conflict situations in Africa. Some of the concerns discussed during the briefing include the shrinking humanitarian space in armed conflicts, the issue of missing persons which isn’t given enough attention, the growing trend of attacks against humanitarian workers and the adverse impacts of sanctions regimes on humanitarian relief operations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ASPECTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY RELATED TO BORDER GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Council’s session on implementation of peace and security related aspects of border governance in Africa was convened at the ministerial level on 19 August, which constituted its 1024th meeting. A [Communiqué](#) elaborating the main findings of the session was issued a day after the meeting.

Progresses obtained in the implementation of the AU Border Programme (AUBP) as well as the AU Border Governance Strategy were welcomed. Some of the essential points highlighted in the Communiqué

include the importance of cross-border coordination among member States as well as with RECs/RMs, the importance of facilitating free movement of people and goods, the use of borders as catalysts for regional and continental integration, and the importance of proper and common management of trans-boundary resources. The maintenance of peace and security in border areas is thus crucial for the successful realisation of these and other goals which are essential for the success of the continent's developmental agenda. Hence, Council's attention to the absence of a division which deals with the AUBP within the Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) department of the AU Commission, and its recommendation for AU Assembly Heads of State and Government to consider dedicating such structure via the Executive Council was of high importance. At its 35th Ordinary Session convened from 5 to 6 February 2022, the AU Assembly stressed the importance of utilising the AUBP for member States to address their border issues and called for the mobilisation of resources to enable the programme discharge its duties. It did not however remark on Council's recommended inclusion of a division within PAPS dealing with the AUBP.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED FINALIZATION AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF AUHA

Council's session convened on 24 August addressed the proposed finalisation and operationalisation of the AU Humanitarian Agency (AUHA). The outcome of the session which constituted Council's 1025th was adopted as a [Press Statement](#).

As highlighted in the Press Statement, the session was convened within the framework of Articles 6(f) and 7(1p) of the Protocol on the Establishment of the PSC, which mandate the Council to facilitate humanitarian action in conflict situations and in cases of natural disasters. While the humanitarian toll of armed conflicts in Africa is consistently increasing, responses are still scattered and not sufficiently effective in reaching affected communities. The AUHA which was established in line with Assembly/AU/Dec.604 (XXVI) has among its the main purposes, the coordination of humanitarian action in the continent which would considerably contributing to breach the existing gaps

in delivering humanitarian assistance in an organised and effective manner.

One of the key outcomes of Council's recent session was its request for the AU Commission to ensure the AUHA's regional presence throughout the five geographical regions of the continent, as to enable close coordination with member States as well as respective RECs/RMs. Member States were also urged to ensure implementation of relevant instruments such as Humanitarian Policy Framework (HPF) and the Disaster Management Policy and the Africa Risk Capacity (ARC), which will be necessary components of addressing humanitarian challenges in the continent, alongside the establishment of the AUHA.

SECOND ANNUAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING BETWEEN THE PSC AND RECS/RMS

On 26 August, the PSC had its second consultative meeting with the various RECs/RMs. Representatives of the eight RECs and two RMs participated at the meeting. International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) was the only RM that was not represented at the meeting. The outcome of the meeting was adopted as a [Joint-Communiqué](#) which was released over a month after convening.

It is to be recalled that the inaugural meeting between the PSC and RECs/RMs was convened in 2019 where pertinent decisions were made with regards to adopting a collaborative approach between the two levels in responding to crises on the continent. In that regard, the conduct of joint-field missions to access areas of common concern; the holding of joint-retreats to reflect on peace and security priorities at the two levels and to adopt common response strategies; and the regular interaction between the PSC and chairpersons of the policy organs on peace and security of RECs/RMs were some decisions the implementation of which is still pending. In addition to constraints relating to financing and lack of sufficient resources to forge ahead with these and the other decisions that were adopted at the inaugural meeting, the absence of defined timelines and deadlines for their realisation could have also contributed to the delay in their implementation.

In addition to serving as an opportunity to emphasise the need to expedite implementation of decisions adopted at the inaugural meeting, the second consultative meeting also led to the adoption of additional measures for the harmonisation and institutionalisation of collaboration between the two levels. Among these, the decisions made “to convene a meeting of the Technical Working Group of Experts, to be established by the AU Commission, as soon as practicable and not later than October 2021, to develop a matrix that outlines concrete and practical steps to be undertaken, assign responsibilities with specific timelines, as well as a draft roadmap with clearly defined modalities and timeframes for the AU PSC” is essential in addressing the concern with regards to having defined timelines and also having a detailed plan for the realisation of previous and recent decisions. The decision made to ensure that future consultative meetings include detailed information on the measures taken and progresses made in realising measures adopted at previous meetings is also an important one for addressing the challenge with implementation.

In terms of addressing some of the more substantive challenges in collaboration and coordination of actions between the two levels, the decision made to commence a dialogue between the two levels concerning the various aspects of the principle of subsidiarity and its application is a critical one which could greatly contribute towards the early and proper response to crises in the various regions of the continent in a coordinated way. Significantly, agreement was also reached between the two levels that application of the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and within the limits of the capabilities of the different RECs/RMs.

Another factor which makes harmonisation of efforts between the two levels challenging is the issue faced with regards to division of labour. With respect to that, the decision made to convene a joint-retreat in 2022 in order to reflect on this particular issue and develop a report on the promotion of common response strategies was an important one. The need to address challenges emanating from dual/multiple membership to RECs/RMs of States affected by conflict or crisis and particularly encouraging support horizontal cooperation and collaboration among RECs and RMs, in addition to their relationship with the PSC

has also been an important note.

Generally, as can be understood from the Joint-Communiqué, the second consultative meeting has served to capture more of the substantive challenges in the harmonisation of decision-making between the two levels. Follow up on the implementation of the decisions adopted at this meeting including in the context of dealing with specific crisis or conflict situations will hence be essential for resolving these challenges.

OTHER PSC ACTIVITIES DURING THE MONTH

In addition to its substantive session, Council was engaged in various other activities during August. On 6 August, the Council convened a meeting to discuss the Draft Final Budget of the PSC and PAPS for 2022. The meeting constituted Council's 1018th session and marked the first time for the PSC to commit a full session to discuss its budget. The main outcome of the 1018th meeting was the approval of by the PSC of its budget, as other organs of the AU do, thereby facilitating ownership. The meeting also called for the effective take off of the Crisis Reserve Facility (CRF).⁶

In addition, the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of August conducted two consultative meetings with his counterparts, in line with Art.17 of the PSC Protocol.⁷ On 25 August, the Chairperson virtually exchanged views with the President of the UNSC for the month, T.S. Tirumurti of India. On 27 August, the PSC Chairperson engaged with another counterpart, the Chairperson of the European Union Political and Security Committee.

The PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) also convened four meetings to discuss priorities for utilizing the AU Peace Fund and to consider the draft AU consensus paper on accessing sustainable and predictable financing for AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs)

⁶ *The CRF is a funding mechanism envisaged within the framework of the AU Peace Fund, with the central purpose of addressing “unforeseen and urgent operational peace and security requirements that require rapid and flexible responses”. See Instrument on the AU Peace Fund (January 2018) Section V, Subsection C, available on: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35298-doc-aupeacefund_instruments.pdf*

⁷ *Art.17 of the PSC Protocol provides the framework for Council's engagement with the UN and other international organisations in fulfilment of its promotional mandate as well as in its pursuit of maintaining peace and security in Africa.*

through UN assessed contributions.

On 30 August, the Chairperson of the PSC within the framework of Article 20 of the PSC Protocol jointly with Amani Africa convened a meeting on the launching of the second edition of [*The African Union Peace and Security Handbook: Guide on the Council's Procedure, Practice and Tradition*](#). The event involved participation of members of the PSC and the wider PSC stakeholders with the Chairperson of the PSC, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and Acting Head of the PSC Secretariat delivering interventions during the launch.

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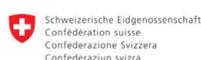
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ADDRESS

On the Corner of Equatorial Guinea St. and ECA Road,
Zequala Complex, 7th Floor, Addis Ababa
Tel: +251118678809
Mobile: +251944723204 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia