

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC

AMANI AFRICA

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MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC – DECEMBER 2021

THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In December, Ethiopia was the Chair of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). The provisional program of work of the month envisaged four sessions.¹ Following the removal of one of the planned sessions and the addition of another not initially envisaged in the provisional program of work, the PSC convened four during the month. Although the initial programme of work envisaged a session on the relationship between South Sudan and Sudan including the status of Abyei, the session did not take place.² On the other hand, the PSC added as new agenda to its program of work the consideration of the conclusions of the high-level seminar held in Oran, Algeria.



FIG 1: PROGRAMME OF WORK PATTERN

One of the four sessions convened during the month was a country specific session addressing the situation in Somalia and the status of consultations on the future of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The remaining sessions consisted of i) a thematic session on the

¹ Amani Africa, *Provisional Program of work of the PSC for the Month of December*, (30 November 2021) available on <https://amaniafrica-et.org/provisional-programme-of-work-of-the-psc-for-the-month-of-december-2021/>

² It was anticipated that the PSC would convene this session on 28 December, following UNSC's meeting to consider the mandate renewal of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). UNISFA's mandate was renewed for a six months period to expire on 15 May 2022, at the UNSC's 8932nd meeting convened on 15 December 2021 (S/PES/2609 (2021)). While maintaining the authorised ceiling for police personnel, the UNSC has reduced the force's troop ceiling from 3,550 to 3,250. It is also to be recalled that following border tensions with Ethiopia, Sudan requested for the withdrawal of Ethiopian contingent of UNISFA. In mid-January 2022, the UN agreed to Sudan's request and announced that the replacement operations will commence in February and last till March 2022.

link between peace and security and development, ii) a consultative meeting between the PSC and the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) and iii) consideration of the conclusions of PSC's Eighth High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa.

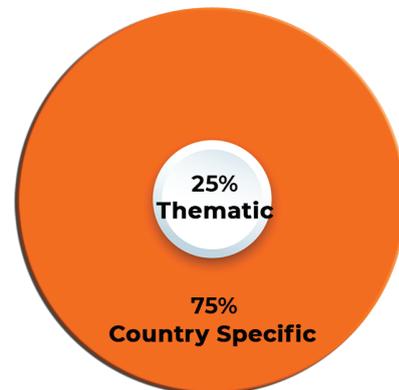


FIG 2: TYPE OF SESSIONS

On average, it took about 10 days for the outcome documents to be published. The outcomes of three of the sessions were adopted as communiqués while one was adopted as a joint-communiqué – no press statement adopted in December.

One of the sessions was convened at ministerial level while the remaining sessions took place at ambassadorial level.

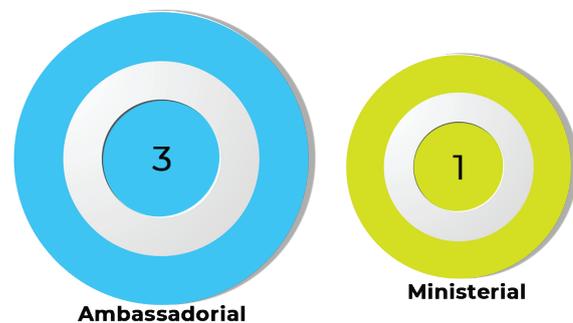


FIG 3: LEVEL OF SESSIONS

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

The first session of the month took place on 7 December and constituted Council's 1053rd meeting. The session addressed the situation in Somalia with a focus on the status of consultations regarding the Independent Assessment Report on AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Post-2021. The outcome of the session was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

The session formed the eighth PSC meeting on Somalia and AMISOM during 2021 and was convened following

PSC's filed mission to Somalia which took place from 8 to 10 November 2021, under Egypt's chairship.³

On the political front, the main focus of the session was on the ongoing process for finalising the elections. While the election of members of the upper house of parliament was completed by mid-November 2021, the election of members of the lower house – who will be responsible for electing the president jointly with members of upper house – was pending. The PSC accordingly encouraged the FGS to ensure that all pending elections are expeditiously conducted in a free, transparent, fair and credible manner.⁴

Despite the significance of the completion of the election of members of the upper house, the 30% quota for women emanating from the 17 September 2020 electoral pact could not be met with only 14 of the 54 seats of the upper house now occupied by women.⁵ Apart from speeding up the conduct of the elections, disagreement and infighting between major political actors both within the FGS and between the FGS and Somalia Federal Member States fuelled political tensions, punctuated by confrontations involving security forces. Taking note of such continued challenges, the PSC has called on all Somalia actors to resolve their differences and ensure that political impasses are no longer manipulated by Al-Shabaab insurgents.

Another key point of deliberation of the 1053rd session was the status of consultations regarding the future of AMISOM post-2021. It is to be recalled that at its 1037th session, the PSC endorsed option one of the report of the AU Independent Assessment (IA) Team on AU's engagement in Somalia post-2021. At its 1042nd session, the PSC reaffirmed the endorsement of this option despite the rejection voiced by the FGS.⁶ At the 1053rd session, while still maintaining its position that option one – which proposed the establishment of an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in

Somalia (a hybrid mission) – is still the best option to ensure sustainable and predictable funding through UN accessed contributions, the PSC acknowledged that any follow-on mission of AMISOM requires the support and consent of the FGS and UNSC – both of which are opposed to the establishment of a hybrid mission.

Having made this acknowledgement, Council requested the AU Commission to continue consultations with the UN on the development of a "Joint Report on the strategic objectives, mandate, size, composition and financing of a follow-on mission, which will have, as part of its end state, the handing over of security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces by the end of 2023, as stipulated in the Somali Transition Plan". Council's reference to the post-2021 AMISOM as a "follow-on mission" was a clear adjustment to its 1037th communiqué which already referred to the mission as "AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia". In addition, Council's request for the joint UN-AU report on the AMISOM follow-on mission to include the mission's end date in a manner aligned with the Somali Transition Plan also demonstrated Council's consideration of the FGS's position, whose main reason for rejecting the establishment of a hybrid mission was that it risks delaying the handover of security responsibilities to Somalia Security Forces. While taking due note of FGS's position, Council still drew attention to the persisting institutional and capacity challenges faced by the Somalia National Army (SNA) in the fight against Al-Shabaab, a major constraint that could continue to impede complete handover of security responsibilities to Somali forces.

In terms of the form of the follow-on mission, Council emphasised once again the importance of ensuring the multidimensional nature of any follow-on mission and the need to ensure balance between the police, military and civilian components of the mission. Reiterating the appeal it made at its 1037th session, Council also requested the UNSC to grant technical roll-over of AMISOM's mandate as consultations continue on the follow-on mission.⁷

In continuation of the intense consultations on AMISOM's transition, the AU and FGS conducted a meeting on 29 December 2021 where the importance of Somali-led and owned security mechanism and

³ The report of the field mission was adopted at the 1053rd session. The visit served the PSC to engage with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and other relevant stakeholders as the bases for determining AU's next steps in its future engagement in Somalia.

⁴ Following a days' long consultation hosted by Prime Minister Roble, the leaders have agreed as of 9 January 2022, to complete the ongoing election of lower house members of parliament by 25 February 2022.

⁵ See Press Release of the 8907th Meeting of the UNSC convened on 17 November 2021 ([SC/14705](#)).

⁶ See more on the details of the option endorsed by the PSC and the reaction of FGS in Amani Africa's [Monthly Digest on the AUPSC for October 2021](#), providing brief analysis of the outcomes of both the 1037th and 1042nd PSC sessions.

⁷ UNSC has adopted Res2614/2021 on 21 December 2021, which allows technical roll-over of AMISOM's mandate for three months until 31 March 2022.

securing predictable and sustainable financing were discussed. Another consultation conducted throughout the week of 17 January 2022 finally resulted in an agreement between AU and FGS on reconfiguring AMISOM and determining the mission's key objectives, benchmarks, composition, mandate, transition phases and strategic end state. According to reports released following this latest consultation, AMISOM is to transition to 'AU Transitional Mission to Somalia (ATMIS)' which is planned to be operational for a period of 33 months until it hands over security responsibilities to National Armed Forces of Somalia. The PSC is yet to convene a formal session to discuss the agreed framework. A key issue which remains to be determined is the modality for financing the mission.

INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN PEACE AND SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Council's session on the nexus between peace and security and development constituted its 1055th session which took place on 14 December. This was the second session on the theme convened during the year, the first one having taken place at PSC's 975th session in January 2021.

The central point addressed at the 975th session – the need to ensure security considerations in financing development efforts in Africa – was once again stressed at the 1055th session. In that regard, having drawn attention to security threats in the continent such as terrorism and transnational organised crime which impede on development efforts, Council called for the full operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF).⁸ It also once again called on the international community to consider debt relief, restructuring and cancellation for African States affected by various security and development threats, including the economic impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.

⁸ It is to be recalled that PSC addressed the status of operationalisation of the ASF during the year, at its 1007th session. In addition to taking note of the progress and challenges related to operationalising the force, one of the key points Council emphasised at that session was the need for the ASF to adopt to the changing nature of conflicts and factors influencing conflict landscape on the continent. One of the efforts made in this regard was the decision to establish the special unit for combating terrorism and violent extremism within the ASF. As a follow up on the status of the special unit's establishment, the PSC at its 1007th session requested the AU Commission to finalize and submit the 2021 – 2026 Comprehensive Roadmap on the Enhancement of the ASF to the Council in the last quarter of 2021. Since 2021 has come to an end with Council yet to receive updates in that regard, the status of the Roadmap will likely form one of the key issues for Council to follow up on in 2022.

The vital role of Africa's youth as well as the importance of informal economies for achieving economic growth and sustainable development were also highlighted at the session. Council also drew attention to key values crucial for maintaining peace and security, such as justice and reconciliation, tolerance of diversity, accountability and pluralism and also emphasised the need to address underlying root causes of insecurity which are usually tied to lack or improper implementation of such democratic values. Council's note regarding the importance of enhancing early warning mechanisms vital for ensuring timely response to disputes before their escalation into full-blown conflicts can also be connected to the enhancement of democratic norms and making timely preventive intervention whenever these norms are violated.

It is notable that the PSC welcomed two security forums that are held on the initiative of two countries.⁹

ANNUAL JOINT- CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE PSC AND UNSC

The 15th annual joint consultative meeting of the PSC and the UNSC constituted one of the meetings of the PSC convened in December 2021. The meeting was convened virtually on 17 December and the outcome of the meeting was adopted as a [Joint-Communiqué](#) published 24 days after convening.

The joint-communiqué of the 15th annual joint consultative meeting captured more details with dedicated focus on specific conflict or crisis situations as compared to the previous year's joint-communiqué which had general political statements bereft of any details relating to specific cases.

As envisaged in the agenda, one of the substantive issues addressed at the consultative meeting was the future of AMISOM post-2021. Taking note of the steps taken during the year with regards to determining the transition of the mission, the Councils emphasised the need for finalizing the remaining steps including – the submission of the joint UN-AU proposal as requested in UNSC Res2568/2021.

⁹ The Aswan Forum is an initiative launched in 2019, during Egypt's chairship of the AU, and the longstanding Tana Forum that is usually held in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia as a platform that brings together state and non-state actors including private sector, partners and international organizations.

With regards to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) which was also one of the agenda items that featured at this year's consultative meeting, the Councils agreed on the importance of ensuring financial, material and technical support to the mission in light of the continued terrorist threat in Mozambique. Both the situation in Mozambique and SAMIM were not discussed previously as an agenda of the session of the PSC.

In addressing the situation in the Sahel region, the Councils highlighted the importance of ad-hoc coalitions including the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the G5 Sahel in the fight against terrorism in the region and encouraged international and bilateral support for such mechanisms. In addressing the other agenda item of the consultative meeting – terrorism and violent extremism in the continent – the joint communiqué stressed the importance of collaborative counter-terrorism approaches and the need to address underlying root-causes of terrorism. Ahead of the 15th joint-consultative meeting, the two Councils also held their 6th joint informal seminar where key issues of partnership between the two were discussed.¹⁰ As indicated in the joint-communicé, one of the important partnership related issues addressed at the informal seminar was the follow up on the understanding the two reached on conducting joint-field visits to conflict affected African states. The adoption of modalities for joint field missions of the two Councils has been a topic of discussion at previous consultative meetings and despite the agreement between the Councils regarding the importance of such visits, differences of perspectives between the two have delayed agreement on the approach for undertaking joint field missions. At the 6th joint informal seminar, while a specific agreed approach was not elaborated, it was agreed that the modalities for conducting field visits shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and through increased informal engagements between the members of the Councils, including monthly meetings between PSC Chairperson and UNSC President.

Another pressing issue addressed at the informal seminar was the longstanding and pressing issue of securing predictable and sustainable financing for AU-

led PSOs. Despite progress made over the years on the imperative for this and the need to tap into UN assessed contributions, agreement on the terms of the use of UN assessed contributions remains outstanding. An interesting aspect of the joint-communicé in relation to the issue of AU-led PSOs was the reference to the AU with regards to the financing of such operations, a reference to the 2015 AU decision for AU to cover 25% of the peace and security budget of the AU.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE EIGHTH HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

Following the convening of the Eighth High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security which was conducted in Oran, Algeria, from 2 to 4 December 2021, Council convened the 1056th session on 30 December where it considered and adopted the conclusions of the Seminar. The outcome of the session was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

At the 1056th session, in addition to endorsing and adopting the recommendations of the conclusions of the High-Level Seminar, Council commended the outgoing members of the A3 (Niger and Tunisia) and welcomed the incoming members (Gabon and Ghana). Further to adopting the conclusions of the seminar, Council also requested for the implementation of key recommendations emerging from the conclusions.

Accordingly, the AU Commission was requested to address urgently the capacity and institutional challenges faced by the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN in New York, so that it can effectively function as Secretariat for the A3. It also requested the Chair of the AU Commission to deploy a specific desk dedicated for ensuring enhanced coordination between the PSC and the A3. Another task assigned to the AU Commission was the development of guidelines on A3 collaboration within the UNSC and coordination between the PSC and A3+1, to be presented at the Ninth High-Level Seminar to be convened in 2022.

The details of the Oran High-Level Seminar and the key recommendations emanating from the conclusions of the seminar are discussed in the following section.

¹⁰ See more details in Amani Africa, *Insights on the PSC on the 6th Annual Informal Joint Seminar and 15th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the PSC and the UNSC*, (16 December 2021) available on <https://amani africa-et.org/bijsajcmpscunsc/>

OTHER PSC ACTIVITIES DURING THE MONTH

Apart from the sessions discussed above, the PSC held a seminar and a joint retreat with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). One of the activities of the PSC during December was the convening of the Eighth High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa which was convened at ministerial level. The High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa is a yearly forum which has been convened since 2013, with the main purpose of enhancing cooperation between the PSC and the African members of the UNSC (A3 States) in advancing Africa's voice within the UNSC. This year's seminar marked the return of the venue to Oran, Algeria where the inaugural meeting was convened in 2013. In addition to representatives of PSC member States, the seminar was attended by representatives of outgoing, incoming and remaining members of the A3 as well as the representatives of the UN and the AU Commission. Angola and South Africa were also represented as friends of the Seminar while the League of Arab States (LAS), Norway and Switzerland participated as partners. It is worth noting that PSC and A3 members were represented mostly at the level of ministers and the Seminar was also Chaired by the PSC Chairperson of the month at ministerial level.

In addition to reflecting on ways for enhancing and strengthening collaboration between the PSC and the A3, this year's seminar also served to discuss the threat of terrorism in the continent and to deliberate on the achievements and challenges of the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

Regarding strengthening coordination between the PSC and the A3+1, key recommendations were made including **the adoption of a manual** providing guidelines for horizontal collaboration among the A3 and between the PSC and A3+1 as well as the dedication of a specific desk at the PSC Secretariat aimed at ensuring effective coordination between the PSC and A3. The importance of **institutionalizing the monthly coordination meetings** between PSC monthly Chairs and the A3 +1 was also emphasised.¹¹

¹¹ Following the emphasis drawn to the importance of these meetings at the 983rd PSC meeting as well as the 13th PSC Retreat (Mombasa Retreat), a meeting between the PSC Chair for the month of November 2021 – Egypt – and the A3+1 was held in early November 2021. This is a noteworthy progressive step noted during 2021 with regards to enhancing coordination between the PSC and A3+1.

On the increasing threat of terrorism in the continent, the central issue addressed was the need to enhance the effectiveness of AU counterterrorism mechanisms. In terms of addressing underlying root-causes of terrorism, the importance of promoting good governance, ensuring inclusivity and responsiveness to legitimate demands of the people were among the key recommendations made. In terms of ensuring institutional coordination and coherence, the Seminar underscored the need for ascertaining clarity and complementarity in mandates and enhancing coordination among regional initiatives and efforts; ensuring enhancement of member States' national capacities as well as collaboration among affected member States in responding to terrorist threats; and ensuring the full operationalisation of the ASF along with its Specialised Counter-Terrorism Unit. The figure below captures the various specialised agencies as well as mechanisms with a role on counter-terrorism.

Specialised Agencies	Counterterrorism Mechanisms
African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)	G-5 Sahel Joint Force
African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL)	Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)
ASF Specialised Unit on Counterterrorism	Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram
Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA)	African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
	Southern Africa Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)
	Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes

TABLE 1: AU SPECIALISED AGENCIES AND MECHANISMS ON COUNTERTERRORISM

With regards to the AGA, the main issue that featured was the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in Africa and its impact on peace and security on the continent. Accordingly, the importance of AGA as a conflict prevention framework was emphasised. One of the key recommendations

emanating from the conclusions of the seminar in this regard was **the need to review the AGA as well as the 2000 Lomé Declaration** in order to ensure that these frameworks and instruments are responsive to the contemporary peace and security landscape of Africa.

In addition to the Eighth High-Level Seminar, the PSC also convened a Joint Retreat with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Held for the first time, the retreat took place from 19 to 21 December 2021 in Durban, South Africa. It is to be recalled that at its 914th session, the PSC requested the AU Commission organise a Joint Retreat of the PSC and APRM, in collaboration with the APRM Secretariat. At its 962nd session, the PSC reiterated its request for the organisation of the Joint Retreat. The December 2021 Joint Retreat was convened in line with these decisions.

The Joint Retreat served as a platform for the two to exchange views on early warning strategies and approaches to addressing underlying root causes of conflicts in the continent. The retreat reflects a recognition on the increasing governance related instabilities in the continent manifested through the resurgence of coups, electoral disputes and mass protests punctuated by confrontations with security forces.

PSC Committee of Experts also convened twice during the month to reflect on the implementation of the Council's decisions during the second half of 2021 and to consider the Report of the activities of the PSC and the state of peace and security in Africa, which is to be finalised and submitted to the AU Assembly at its upcoming 35th Ordinary Session, expected to take place from 5 to 6 February 2022.



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Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research; training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African Union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

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