



## **Joint Communiqué: United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security Holds Eighteenth Consultative Meeting in Addis-Ababa on 11 February 2020**

**Addis-Ababa, 11 February** — The United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security held its eighteenth consultative meeting at the African Union Headquarters in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia on 11 February 2020.

The meeting reviewed the status of the partnership between the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) with an update on the implementation of the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The meeting also exchanged views on the situations in the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Mali and the Sahel region. Participants further discussed cooperation in support to elections in Africa.

The Joint Task Force further exchanged views on some of the opportunities and challenges with regard to the implementation of the AU-UN partnership, including the necessity to enhance a common understanding of the fundamentals of the partnership, respective approaches and expectations among the entities of the UN and the AU. This includes facilitation of strategic and operational coordination in the field where both organizations have a presence. The meeting therefore underscored the need for coordination and close cooperation among UN and AU field presences. Both sides also stressed the need for the inclusion of women in ongoing peace processes.

The AU Commission and the UN Secretariat were represented respectively by Commissioners Minata Samaté-Cessouma (Political Affairs) and Smâil Chergui (Peace and Security); and the Under-Secretaries-General Rosemary DiCarlo (Political and Peacebuilding Affairs), Jean-Pierre Lacroix (Peace Operations) and Hanna Tetteh (Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of UNOAU). Under-Secretary General Atul Khare (Operational Support) attended the meeting via VTC from New York. The meeting was also attended by other senior officials from the two Organizations.

The Joint Task Force welcomed the ongoing and considerable progress achieved in the UN-AU partnership, noting that engagements at all levels in the implementation of the Joint Framework in Peace and Security have become more predictable, focused, constructive and systematic. They particularly welcomed continued cooperation in conflict prevention and mediation, and support to peace operations. They emphasized the imperative to enhance such cooperation further in order to effectively address emerging and ongoing peace and security issues across the continent as well as the need to work together to find practical solutions for the provision of support required to sustain AU peace support operations.

The Joint Task Force further emphasized the need for enhanced coordination and collaboration in supporting elections on the Continent in 2020 and beyond. They had a *tour d'horizon* of the socio-political situations in a number of countries organizing elections in 2020. The meeting agreed to foster complementarity in the area of electoral support and technical assistance to Member States and undertake joint initiatives aimed at preventing and mitigating election-related crises. The Joint Task Force further



agreed to work together in supporting Member States' efforts in strengthening their electoral institutions and processes and in enhancing their capacities to organize peaceful, credible, transparent and inclusive elections. In this context, the meeting agreed to undertake a joint visit to Niger ahead of the upcoming general elections.

The Joint Task Force welcomed the launch by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire of a new phase of political dialogue on the Electoral Code, ahead of the 2020 presidential election. They expressed concern about the growing crisis of confidence between key actors of the electoral process and encouraged all stakeholders to engage in a constructive dialogue, to ensure broad consensus on key contentious issues pertaining to the elections. The AU and the UN expressed hope that national stakeholders will work together to promote a conducive environment ahead of the upcoming election in 2020.

With regard to Ethiopia, the Joint Task Force explored areas of cooperation between the UN and the AU ahead of the 2020 elections, including technical assistance to the electoral commission. The meeting noted the UN and AU's continued support in the areas of dialogue, reconciliation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding including support to the Security Sector and the management of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Joint Task Force expressed concern over the continuing electoral-related tensions in Guinea. The AU and the UN urged all stakeholders to promote and engage in constructive dialogue to resolve any political disagreement and encouraged them to resort to legal and peaceful means to address disputes. The meeting expressed the hope that national stakeholders will promote a conducive environment ahead of the legislative and presidential elections in the country.

The Joint Task Force recognized climate change as a threat multiplier to local, national, regional and continental peace, security and stability. The meeting expressed concern over the adverse impacts of climate change on security as manifested in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and other areas, including through inter-communal clashes, large-scale displacement and food insecurity. They welcomed the existing collaboration between the AU and the UN to systematically address the linkages between climate change and security and called for joint efforts to implement among others the Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflicts between Communities. In this context, it was agreed to establish a joint working group to ensure collective action on the interlinkages between climate change and security.

On the situation in Mali, the Joint Task Force expressed concern on the persistent insecurity in the country and further took note of the outcome of the national political dialogue concluded on 22 December 2019. The meeting reaffirmed its support for the territorial integrity of Mali and the restoration of government control throughout the country. The Joint Task Force urged the parties to refocus attention on the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The Joint Task Force further recognized the important role MINUSMA and MISAHÉL continue to play in support of the Malian parties to implement the peace agreement.

With regard to the Sahel Region, the UN and the AU expressed concern at the spread of terrorism and insecurity in the region, which is spilling over into the neighboring countries of the Gulf of Guinea. The meeting noted that the instability threatens to reverse the significant gains that have been attained in the



region and trigger grave humanitarian consequences within and beyond the Sahel region. The UN and AU will commit to supporting regionally owned initiatives to curb the threat of violent extremism and organised crime including the 2020-2024 ECOWAS Plan of Action to Eradicate Terrorism, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, and work towards mobilizing resources to support these initiatives.

The Joint Task Force reaffirmed the importance of further intensifying joint efforts to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and called for the support of the countries of the region in mobilizing critical funding for the upcoming presidential and legislative elections. The meeting underscored that the elections must be fully inclusive of all Central Africans. It was further announced that Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix and AU Commissioner Smail Chergui plan to visit CAR in April 2020. Following on their last joint visit in October 2019, the objectives of the joint visit will be to generate additional momentum in the implementation of the peace process and ensure sustained support from the international community. The meeting welcomed the recent reactivation of the CAR-Chad Bilateral Commission, which will help to address border security and transhumance issues; and underscored the importance of similar collaboration with other neighboring countries.

On Libya, the Joint Task Force welcomed the conclusions of the International Conference in Berlin on 19 January 2020, the coordination meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of neighbouring countries held in Algiers on 23 January 2020, the 8<sup>th</sup> AU High-Level Committee meeting on Libya held in Brazzaville on 30 January 2020 and the AU Peace and Security Council Summit on Libya and the Sahel held in Addis Ababa on 8 February 2020. The Joint Task Force took note of the Joint Military Committee 5+5 meeting which started in Geneva on 3 February 2020 under UNSMIL facilitation and urged the parties to transform the existing truce into a long-lasting cease-fire. They agreed that the UN and the AU should continue to enhance coordination, including in preparation for the Inter-Libyan Reconciliation Dialogue. In this context, the UN and AU agreed to undertake a joint visit in Libya. The meeting further took note of the offer by Algeria to bridge differences among the Libyan stakeholders. The Joint Task Force expressed serious concern over the continued violation of the arms embargo in Libya and renewed their appeal to all external actors to immediately cease all interference in the internal affairs of Libya, in particular delivery of arms and the deployment of foreign fighters. The Joint Task Force also expressed serious concern at the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Libya, including as a result of the resumption of confrontations since April 2019.

On Somalia, the Joint Task Force called for a comprehensive political strategy in support of Somalia's peacebuilding and state-building processes, including a common regional approach among Somalia's neighbours and the wider international community. The meeting expressed concern over the continuing stalemate between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States as a major obstacle to fully achieving needed progress on all priority areas including elections, constitutional review and building a capable federated Somali security sector in the context of the Somalia Transition Plan. They stressed the urgent need for a resumption of the political dialogue between the leaders of the Federal Government and the Federal Member States as a prerequisite for achieving the necessary milestones for peaceful, timely, credible and inclusive elections in 2020/21. The Joint Task Force welcomed security gains achieved by Somali security forces supported by AMISOM and underlined the need for continued Somali-led efforts to extend and consolidate State authority through joint coordination between Somali security



forces, AMISOM, UN and partners. The meeting welcomed the ongoing implementation of Security Council resolution 2472 (2019) and AU PSC Communique 848 (2019) and stressed the need to align the end of February 2020 AMISOM troop reductions with Somali plans for takeover and most importantly to preserve gains and ensure the protection of civilians. The Joint Task Force took note of the upcoming Wilton Park Conference on Security in Somalia Post-2021 in Addis Ababa from 11-13 March 2020.

Regarding the situation in South Sudan, the Joint Task Force commended the current efforts to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. It further welcomed the contribution of the AU to the peace process, along with the UN support, including towards transitional security arrangements. The meeting underscored the need to ensure that the current pre-interim period is not further extended, and thus called for the timely establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity by 22 February 2020.

On Sudan, the Joint Task Force welcomed the progress achieved in the formation of a transitional government and the launch of a comprehensive programme of political and economic reforms as well as the peace process with Sudan's armed groups. The meeting recognized the leading role played by women and youth in securing Sudan's political gains and emphasized the importance of their empowerment and inclusion during Sudan's transition. The Joint Task Force renewed its appreciation for the role played by the AU and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in paving the way for Sudan's transition. They stressed the importance of the AU and the UN leading the international community's efforts to accompany the country through its delicate transition. The meeting reiterated the importance of the removal of Sudan from USA list of States Sponsors of Terrorism (SST) and expressed appreciation for the ongoing bilateral efforts between Sudan and the USA to address this matter. The meeting further pledged the two organizations' full support to the country in accessing concessionary finance from International Financial Institutions and securing debt relief. The Joint Task Force expressed full support to the organization of a donor conference to mobilize urgently needed international economic assistance.

The meeting took note of the ongoing efforts exerted by the UNAMID to protect civilians under threat in Darfur. It further encouraged the parties to the conflict to make the necessary concessions at the peace process in South Sudan to end the conflict, especially given that the new administration continues to demonstrate the will to address outstanding root causes of the conflict in Darfur. The JTF welcomed the ongoing efforts to drawdown UNAMID.

With regard to Western Sahara, the Joint Task Force look forward to the appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. The UN and AU reiterated their attachment to international legality and encouraged the parties to participate constructively and without preconditions in the political process.

The Joint Task Force welcomed the decision by the AU to fast-track the implementation of the Agenda 2063 flagship initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa, and new projects initiated by the UN in 2018 to support the initiative. In this regard, the AU's declaration of 2020 as the Year of Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development was welcomed by the Joint Task Force.



The next statutory meeting of the Joint Task Force will take place in September 2020, in New York, on the margins of the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly.