

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

Uganda was the stand-in chair of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) in January. Five sessions were convened during the month. Out of these, two were substantive sessions with specific thematic focus while the remaining three were committed to the consideration of reports and outcome documents emerging from the PSC's various activities in the preceding months.

All the sessions were held at the level of ambassadors. The outcomes of three of the sessions were adopted as communiqués while the remaining two sessions had no publicly available outcome documents. It took 8 days on average for the release of the outcome documents.

CONCERN REITERATED REGARDING IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST AU MEMBER STATES AT THE 9TH HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

At its 1130th session which took place on 10 January, the PSC considered the [Conclusions](#) of the 9th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa which took place in Oran, Algeria from 07 to 09 December 2022.

Conducted annually since 2013, the high-level seminar on peace and security in Africa serves the main purpose of strengthening the capacity of the African three members of the UN Security Council (A3) to effectively promote, articulate and defend common African positions on peace and security issues relevant to the continent.

Further to discussing approaches to enhance coordination between the PSC and the A3 for strengthening Africa's voice within the UN Security

Council, the 9th High-Level Seminar also served to reflect on some key trends and thematic issues of relevance to peace and security in Africa. The first one of these was the issue of imposition and application of sanctions by international organisations and partners against AU member states. As some of the recent PSC decisions would indicate, the imposition of sanctions and punitive measures against AU states has become an issue receiving increased attention. The seminar served to reiterate concerns over the unilateral imposition of sanctions by some sections of the international community as well as the inclination of the UN and other international organisation to impose sanctions against AU member states struggling to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Relevant other Executive decision:

35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly [[Assembly/AU/Res.1\(XXXV\)](#)]: expressed alarm at the 'disproportionate and indiscriminate human costs of unilateral sanctions and their negative effects on the civilian population', expressed concern regarding the 'negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on post conflict reconstruction and peace building' and urged all states to 'refrain from imposing unilateral coercive measures' and 'to remove such measures, as they are contrary to the African Union Constitutive Act, United Nations Charter and norm and principles governing peaceful relations among states at all levels'.

Having noted and reiterated the counterproductive nature of some of these sanctions and unilateral coercive measures, some recommendations were made at the 9th high level seminar to address this concern. Some of the key recommendations include:

- Ensuring measured, proportionate, context-specific, objective, smart and strictly targeted nature of sanctions so as to ensure their impact is limited to perpetrators of instability and does not extend to civilian populations.
- Establishment of clear benchmarks for sanctions as to ensure they achieve their intended impacts.
- Conduct of comprehensive technical assessments prior to lifting arms embargoes.

Another issue which received some attention at the seminar was disarmament and control of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW). In this regard, some of the key points raised included the importance of addressing underlying root causes and drivers which facilitate the proliferation and transfer of SALW; the need to fortify inter-state cooperation including through enhanced intelligence and information sharing as well as conduct of joint operations; and the importance for member states to consolidate effective authority throughout their national territories in order to avoid creation of ungoverned territories, one of the convenient preconditions for the spread of SALW.

The growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism also formed part of the issues addressed at the high-level seminar. Demonstrating recognition of the fact that terrorism in Africa requires a multidimensional response that goes beyond deploying hard security measures, the seminar emphasised the importance of adopting development-oriented and holistic approaches which aim to address comprehensively, the underlying structural root causes of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.



'To effectively address the threats to peace and security in our Continent, we have no other viable option, other than to effectively promote people-centered, collective, coherent, and well-coordinated peace and security efforts.'

*H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye,
AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security*

Having considered the outcomes of the 9th High-Level Seminar, the PSC adopted the Conclusions in the [Communiqué](#) of its 1130th session.

Key actionable decision requiring follow-up:

- The AU Commission was requested to facilitate effective implementation of the out-

comes of the 9th High-Level Seminar, 'including the development of an implementation matrix for the Conclusions of the Seminar to be submitted for consideration by the 10th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa' which will take place in December 2023.

PSC COMMENDED AU's NEW INITIATIVES TO CONSOLIDATE ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN THE CONTINENT BUT FAILED TO FOLLOW UP ON ONE OF ITS NEWLY INTRODUCED TOOLS – THE 'RETURN VISIT'

PSC's 1132nd session, held on 20 January, was dedicated to the consideration of the half year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa, which was adopted by the session. Members of the PSC received updates on the outcomes of elections conducted in the second half of 2022 (July to December) and an outlook for the first half of 2023. The outcome of the session was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

As shown below in the map, the session reviewed elections in eight countries that were conducted in the second half of 2022, namely, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Kenya, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Equatorial Guinea, Tunisia, and Lesotho. While congratulating these countries for successfully organizing elections, the session singled out Kenya and Lesotho for the peaceful transfer of power. In addition to discussing the elections already conducted, the session also made preview of the elections (presidential and/or legislative) that are going to be organized in six countries during the first half of 2023 (January-June). These countries are Benin, Djibouti, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone.

Welcoming the efforts being deployed by these countries to organize the elections, PSC also requested the Commission to 'adequately support these democratic processes, including through the deployment of AU Election Observer Missions within allocated budgetary resources.'



Apart from assessing outcomes of elections and outlooks, the PSC reflected on trends observed in the continent's electoral and political governance. In that regard, the session observed a 'growing and encouraging trend' of peaceful electoral processes, gradual measures to promote increased participation of women and youth, improvement in election management practices, and recourse to legal means for addressing electoral disputes. On the other hand, the persistence of unconstitutional changes of governments was alluded as a challenge to the political governance with the session condemning the attempted coup d'états in São Tome and Príncipe and in The Gambia. PSC also took the opportunity to request the Commission to expedite the operationalization of the PSC Sub-Committee on sanctions.

The other aspect of the session was supports provided by the Commission to member states, particularly through the provision of technical assistance to national election management bodies and deployment of AU Election Observation Missions (AUEOM). In the session, the PSC requested the expedition of the finalization of the Draft Standards for Effective AU Election-Related Support to member states, particularly the two knowledge generation initiatives of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (DPAPS) - Documentary Film on Election Observation Mission in Africa, and 'Elections in Africa Report – Democracy at Work'.

The 'Elections in Africa Report – Democracy at Work' is envisaged to be an annual analytical report based on the two mid-year reports of the Chairperson of the Commission on elections in Africa that aims to reflect on the lessons learned and recommendations for relevant stakeholders to strengthen electoral democracy in the continent.

It is not clear however whether the PSC accepted DPAPS proposal of creating an 'Advisory Panel on Democratic Governance' – a panel to be composed of eminent African experts from the five AU regions which is envisaged to serve as a platform/avenue for reflecting on continental strategies to consolidate democracy in the continent – as there was no mention of this initiative in the communique.

Also highlighted in the communique is the newly introduced integrative approach that utilizes preventive diplomacy and mediation missions through the Panel of the Wise, which the PSC commended its deployment to accompany election processes in member states. This approach integrates preventive diplomacy and mediation and has proved to be an effective AU instrument in helping member states to avert electoral violence as witnessed during the 2021 Zambia's election where AU's diplomatic intervention successfully averted post-election violence and facilitated peaceful transfer of power in that country. The same approach was employed during the August 2022 Kenyan elections.

The session also paid attention to the practice and methodology of AUEOM. Three points are worth highlighting in that regard. The first is the deployment of the joint AU-Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Election Observation Mission to Kenyan elections, which the PSC commended as 'a model' for strategic collaboration between the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs). This was the first time that the AU and COMESA deployed a 'fully-fledged' joint mission. The second is its appeal to member states for the timeous implementation of the recommendations of the Election Observer Missions. An important initiative launched by the AU in 2021 to follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the observer missions was what is called a 'Return Visit' of the election observer team to the country where they observed election.

In November 2021, the AU Commission facilitated for the first time the Return Visit of H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma and an expert team to present the Final Report of the AUEOM to Zambian authorities and stakeholders and engage in discussion with them on the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Mission. The initiative of the Return Visit was launched with a conviction by the leadership of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security that 'if recommendations are not addressed, electoral shortcomings and vulnerabilities are likely to persist, and may worsen.'

The practice of the 'Return Visit' has not been followed-up by the Commission since its first practice in November 2021. Even more striking is the failure of the communique adopted at the 1132nd session to make reference to this important initiative. PSC's appeal to the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) to address the funding challenges that AUEOMs have continued to face was the other point highlighted in the communique.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

PSC requested the Commission to:

- Expedite the operationalization of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions.
- Expedite the finalization of the Draft Standards for Effective AU Election-Related Support to member states, in particular, the Documentary Film on Election Observation in Africa; and the "Elections in Africa Report - Democracy at Work" knowledge generation initiative.

PSC also directed the Commission to urgently submit to it a Progress Report on the attainment of the governance and peace aspects of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 (2013-2023) with the view to exploring options for a more accelerated approach for the second Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING THREATS TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA IDENTIFIED AS CONCERNING TRENDS IN PSC'S REPORT ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE STATUS OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

On 26 January, the PSC convened its 1133rd session which served to consider and endorse the Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, which was presented to the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in line with Article 7(1) (q) of the PSC Protocol. The PSC also considered and endorsed the Report on Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps on Silencing the Guns in Africa which was also presented to the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

The session had no publicly available outcome document. In terms of the Report on the Activities of the PSC and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, some of the key findings incorporated in Part-I of the report (PSC's activities in 2022) include the increased consultations between the PSC and other AU organs noted in 2022, scaled up engagement between PSC and various RECs/RMs and the commendable initiation of formal engagement between the PSC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Part-II of the report which deals with the state of peace and security in the continent drew attention to some of the worrying persisting as well as emerging threats to peace and security noted during 2022. Increasing spread of terrorism and violent extremism, spike in unconstitutional changes of government and complex political transitions, adverse impacts of climate change on peace and security, impact of disinformation on governance and peace and security, and growing presence of foreign troops and mercenaries in the context of deteriorating conflict situations are some of trends discussed in the report.

EMPHASIS GIVEN TO THE NEXUS BETWEEN PEACE, SECURITY, GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 1134th session of the PSC which took place on 27 January served to adopt the [Tangier Declaration](#) which encompasses the outcomes and conclusions of the AU Policy Conference on promoting peace, security and development nexus, held in Tangier, Morocco, from 25 to 27 October 2022.

As captured in the Declaration, the Tangier policy conference explored in some detail, the interconnectedness of peace and security and development and the importance of utilising this nexus for enhanced regional integration and advancement of peace and security in the continent. In connection to that, key aspects of promoting integration including through implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and guaranteeing free movement of people within the continent were stressed as key elements for advancing inclusive growth and sustainable development which entail positive implications to peace and security.

In the past, the PSC has also dedicated a number of sessions to deliberate on the link between peace and security and development. However, the agenda has not been properly regularised and institutionalised and there has been little follow-up of implementation of decisions made by the PSC on the issue.

Relevant previous PSC decisions:

883rd Session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1 \(DCCCLXXXIII\)](#)]: noting the intricate link between peace and security and development, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to submit annual reports highlighting efforts made towards enhancing coordination between the various departments within the AU Commission and AU Specialized Agencies to support the PSC.

1055th Session [[PSC/MIN/COMM.1055 \(2021\)](#)]: the PSC underscored the 'need for an integrated, inclusive and comprehensive approach in addressing the peace, security and development nexus in order to mitigate against the

perpetuation of violent conflicts' and called for 'continued collaboration between the AU Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, African Development Bank and the broader international community on strategies to overcome socio-economic challenges and address human security'.

Further to adopting the Tangier Declaration, the [Communiqué](#) of PSC's 1034th session also decided to submit the Declaration to the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly.

PSC MARKED THE INAUGURAL COMMEMORATION OF THE 'AFRICA DAY OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION' ON 31 JANUARY

On 31 January, at its 1135th session, PSC marked the inaugural commemoration of the 'Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation'. The commemoration is in line with the [Declaration](#) on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted at the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 28 May of last year, which instituted 31 January of each year, as 'Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation'. PSC did not adopt an outcome document for the commemoration.

The open session featured high-level speakers, including Angola's President, H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, who was appointed as AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly, as well as Domitien Ndayizeye, Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise and former President of the Republic of Burundi. During the session, PSC [agreed](#) to promote inclusive reconciliation processes and social cohesion at national levels.

The Commissioner for PAPS, Bankole Adeoye, [urged](#) for the 'popularization' and 'implementation' of the day in Member States and further highlighted the intention to commission a study on the continent's experience of reconciliation to allow Member States share and learn from their experience.

Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, also issued a [Statement](#) on the same day welcoming the date of 31 January as the inaugural commemoration of the African Day of Peace and Reconciliation and calling for 'all-inclusive dialogue and reconciliation engagements that will solidify democracy, effective governance, the rule of law and constitutionalism'.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC

During the month, the PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) considered the Report on the Activities of the PSC and the State of Peace and Security in Africa and the Report on the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps on Silencing the Guns in Africa, before the reports were considered and endorsed by the PSC at ambassadorial level. The Revised Draft Consensus Paper on Predictable, Adequate, and Sustainable Financing for AU Peace and Security Activities was also considered during the month and it was presented for consideration to the AU Assembly's 36th Ordinary Session.



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ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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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