

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In the month of July, Senegal chaired the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). The PSC conducted a total of five sessions, three of which focused on thematic issues, while the other two addressed country/region-specific situations. The sessions were conducted at the ambassadorial level, except for one ministerial level session.

The outcomes of all the sessions were adopted as Communiqué. On average, it took 12 days for the release of published outcome documents.

The sessions planned for the month in the PSC program of work were four. However, as a result of the coup d'état that took place in Niger from 26 – 28 July 2023, the PSC held an emergency session on the situation in Niger on 28 July.

CSOs TO BE INCLUDED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTER-REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE PLATFORM (I-RECKE) AND AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS FACILITY (AFSIT)

The first substantive session of the PSC, held on 6 July 2023, was dedicated to the Second Annual Consultative Meeting with representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

The first Consultative meeting was held on 14 September 2022, which focused on discussing the implementation of the Livingstone formula and the Maseru Conclusions as well as engagement on the implementation of the Accra Declaration and Malabo Decisions relating to Unconstitutional Changes of Governments (UCG).

During the second consultative meeting held on 6 July 2023, the Head of Programs of ECOSOCC, Mr. Osei Kyeretwie made a statement on the activities of the ECOSOCC, focusing on its coordination and

mobilization of CSOs to support the work of the peace and security work of the AU, including the PSC. He also provided an update on its progress on the establishment CSOs database considered to be crucial in actively engaging CSOs and mobilizing them towards the implementation of AU instruments, and presented on its two flagship citizens engagement initiatives, namely: Citizens' Forum and the People's Assemblies that provide institutional platform for citizens to provide their perspectives and feedback into the work of the AU to civil societies.¹

The outcome of the session was [a communiqué](#).



Source: @AUC PAPS Website

One of the expectations for this second annual consultative meeting was a review of the follow-up to the outcome of the first engagement between PSC and CSOs into practice, and its enhancement by making it a useful avenue for substantive policy dialogue and provision of input by CSOs. As noted in [our analysis](#) it is important to ensure that the consultative meeting does not remain a mere box-ticking exercise, and should rather be a platform for the reflection of non-state perspectives and the provision of feedback on the policy actions of the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on various peace and security issues, thereby contributing to the effective execution of their mandates and updating their actions. In this regard, the successful continued engagement of the PSC with CSOs requires a clarification of what the consultative meeting contributes to. However, such clarification has not been discussed or made during this second consultative meeting. Rather, it

¹ CSOs that delivered statements during the session representing four regions and a network of CSOs were: the Southern Africa Partnerships for Prevention of Conflict (SAPPC), the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS) and the Pan-African Civil Society Organizations Network on Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PANPAPS).

was not more than a platform for the introduction and presentation of the activities of CSOs from four regions of Africa, but not focused on the policy actions of the AU and RECs and feedback towards their implementation.

With particular regard to the inclusivity of CSOs to support the work of the PSC, there are various efforts from within the AU, ECOSOCC as well as CSO-led initiatives. The AUC Department of PAPS has launched the African Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace) intended to drive the strategic partnerships between the department and think tanks and research centres focusing on governance, peace and security. To this end, during this second consultative meeting, the PSC has recognized and underlined “the importance of launching the Network of Think Tanks and Research Centres and the report of the mapping exercises of CSOs working on governance, peace and security matters by the AU Commission”. Additionally, as a CSO-led initiative, the Pan-African Civil Society Organisations Network on Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PANPAPS) is another important initiative for expanding the space for participation of CSOs in the peace and security work of the AU.

On the update on the development of the comprehensive database by the ECOSOCC, the PSC welcomed the progress that has been made, but also urged the ECOSOCC to ‘expedite the finalization of the database’ and ‘to ensure inclusivity and identification of a theme-based classification of the CSOs in order to better assist the work of the PSC and other organs.’

Of particular importance for enhancing the substantive engagement of CSOs in the peace and security work of the AU, proposed in our Insight, that received PSC’s nod identifying avenues for CSOs contribution to the conflict prevention and peacemaking work of the AU. In this respect, the PSC emphasized the ‘imperative to cultivate additional opportunities for engagement between CSOs and the PSC ... including providing support to mediation and peacemaking efforts and expert contribution to early warning and advice on peace support operation’s.

The other new and important outcome of this second consultative session was the decision of the PSC on the ‘inclusion of the CSOs in the activities of the Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange Platform (I-RECKE) and Africa Supporting Inclusive Transitions Facility to ensure that the voices of the civilians are included in AU’s peace and security activities.’²

PSC EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN OVER THE DELAYS FACED IN TRANSITION PROCESSES IN COUNTRIES IN THE SAHEL REGION

The 1162nd session of the PSC took place on 20 July and was committed to a briefing on the situation in the Sahel region. The briefing was delivered by the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and the Head of the AU Mission in Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL).³

The continuing insecurity in the Sahel caused mainly as a result of terrorism and violent extremism, fragile political transitions faced in multiple member states in the region and the ongoing humanitarian crisis were the main issues that featured during the session as captured in the [Communiqué](#) adopted as the outcome of the 1162nd meeting.



Source: @AUC PAPS Twitter Account

Threats posed as a result of terrorist operations continue unabated in the Sahel region. One recent development that is feared to have an exacerbating impact on the already fragile security situation in the region is the withdrawal of the United Nations (UN) Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization

² There is an error in the designation of the African Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions in the communiqué.

³ Statements were also presented by the representative of the G5 Sahel secretariat as well as representatives of member states of the G5 Sahel including Chad, Mauritania and Niger. Statements were also delivered from UN and EU and representatives of the concerned RECs/RMs – ECCAS and ECOWAS – also participated in the session.

Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) from Mali. In this respect, the PSC expressed its concern that MINUSMA's withdrawal has the potential to reverse gains made in the implementation of Mali's 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

As the past couple of years and previous months of 2023 have demonstrated, the Sahel region is experiencing coups and accompanying complex political transitions, while the socio-economic realities in many Sahelian countries remain dire, challenged not only by the absence of stability and security, but also due to various factors involving impacts of climate change, and food insecurity among others. In this context and to mitigate the potential negative impacts of the withdrawal of MINUSMA including on the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali, the AU Commission was requested to 'urgently initiate consultations with the chef de file of the International Mediation and other members of the Mediation, including Economic Commission for Western African States (ECOWAS) and the UN, as well as with the Malian parties, on how the AU could further help in the maintenance and functioning of critical arrangements related to the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement'. On the peace process under this agreement, the PSC expressed its 'deep concern over the persistent deadlock in the peace process in Mali and urged the 'Transitional Authorities and signatory movements to resume dialogue.'

With respect to complex political transitions in the region, the PSC welcomed the progress made in Mali and encouraged further efforts 'towards completing the transition process.' At the same time, the PSC expressed 'deep concern over the delays in the transition processes in the countries of the Sahel'. In this respect, the PSC encouraged Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea to facilitate the visit of the ECOWAS mediators of the respective countries. It also urged the concerned countries to fully comply with the agreed transition timelines and to prioritise dialogue and inclusivity of all the relevant stakeholders including political parties and civil society actors, in the transition process. Even as the PSC had this session and remarked on the need for transition authorities to discharge their commitments, and during the PSC's field mission to the region – specifically in Burkina Faso – a coup was carried out in Niger adding yet another member state in the region to those that are experiencing complex transitions.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

- The AU Commission and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) were requested to expedite operationalisation of the Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT).
- PSC reiterated its call 'as a matter of urgent necessity, 'to operationalize the Joint Transition Monitoring Committees in the respective countries.'

The AFSIT is an initiative launched through the collaboration of the AU Commission and the UNDP with the basic aim of providing support to Africa countries undergoing complex political transitions, including those that experienced unconstitutional change of governments. The call to institute the AFSIT as a mechanism to support 'credible, inclusive and legitimate' process in member states under transition was made by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held on 28 May 2023.



Source: @ African Union Commission Website

Launch of AFSIT in Nairobi, Kenya

PSC REQUESTS THE REVIEW OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

The other session held, proposed by Senegal was on 21 July 2023 focusing on community response to security challenges.⁴ The main objective was to enhance

⁴ The meeting featured opening remarks from Aissata Tall Sall, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the AU for July 2023, as well as introductory remarks by Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security. The session also

the resilience of communities in the face of security challenges affecting various parts of the continent. Specifically, the discussion centred around exploring ways to involve youth, women, and African civil societies in preventive diplomacy initiatives. Additionally, the session aimed to find ways to facilitate civil-military cooperation in peace support operations in Africa and to encourage AU Member States to participate in self-assessment processes to document and analyze the lessons learned from local communities. The session discussed various strategies to strengthen and sustain community responses to security challenges.

In the [communique](#) adopted during the session, the PSC highlighting the need for recognizing the role of communities in peace and security on the role of religious and community leaders emphasized 'significant contributions of communities, traditional leaders, faith-based organizations, women, and young people in promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development on the continent.'

As part of the recognition of the multidimensional approach, the PSC urged member states to promote policies that are inclusive, transparent, and development-oriented, with the ultimate aim of facilitating the effective participation of communities in preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts and crisis situations.

The session also highlighted the significance of strengthening civil-military relations and community policing to promote national and community ownership of peace and security programs, thereby facilitating local buy-in. Underscoring the increasing policy significance of community responses to security challenges, the PSC also envisaged the development of 'an AU strategy for promoting community responses to conflicts on the Continent.'

The PSC decided to dedicate one open session each year to consider community responses to security challenges in Africa.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

The PSC requested:

- The AU Commission to review the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in order to adapt it to contemporary security challenges facing the Continent, and to develop an AU strategy for promoting community responses to conflicts on the Continent, including peace research institutions, to intensify multi-stakeholder dialogue and enhance the traditional and legitimate role of religious and customary leaders in African peace efforts;
- Member States to fully embrace the Continental conflict prevention frameworks, including the voluntary Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS).
- The Commission and Partners to implement the Declaration of the First AU Policy Conference on Promoting the Peace, Security and Development nexus in Africa- The Promise of Regional Integration, in line with paragraph 34 of Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.842(XXXVI)] adopted by the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, from 18 to 19 February 2023; and
- The AU Office of the Special Envoy on Women Peace and Security to integrate issues relating to Women in Development and Climate Change, in its future forums taking into consideration the outcomes of the meeting on "the overarching challenges of climate change and the women's agenda" organized on 16 February 2023 on the margins of the 36th Summit of the African Union.

included presentations by Dr. Vasu Gounden, Executive Director at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and by Dr. Bakary Sambé of the Timbuktu Institute, African Centre for Peace Studies.

PSC GAVE TWO WEEKS DEADLINE FOR THE JUNTA IN NIGER TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

On 28 July, the PSC at the request of some of its member states held an emergency session to discuss the situation in the Republic of Niger. This marked the 1164th session of the Council. During the session, Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (PAPS), presented a briefing, while Amadou Hassane Mai Dawa, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Niger to the AU, delivered a statement.

The session was held two days after the junta, which declared itself the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP), composed of senior officers from various branches of defence and security forces launched a coup d'état in the Republic of Niger and detained President Mohamed Bazoum and his family on 26 July. The meeting also came after the ECOWAS released a [communiqué](#) of 26 July condemning, what it called 'an attempted coup d'état'.

The PSC as is customary for such cases adopted as a [Communiqué](#), which was released on the day of the session. The Communiqué expressed concern over the recent resurgence of military coups in Africa, condemned the coup, and urgently demanded the immediate release of the democratically elected President Bazoum.

The key outcome of the PSC session hinges on the time limit that the Council imposed on the Junta. Unlike its response to previous coups, the PSC did not invoke Article 7(g) of the PSC Protocol this time. Instead, it gave the junta fifteen (15) days to restore constitutional order. Most crucially, the PSC designating the situation as a coup condemned it in the strongest terms possible. This stands in contrast to the ECOWAS insistence that the situation merely constituted 'attempted coup.' The consequence of this determination of the situation as coup by the PSC is that upon the expiry of the two weeks period if constitutional order is not restored the PSC would invoke its Article 7(1)(g) and apply Article 30 of the Constitutive Act suspending Niger.

Key actionable decisions by the PSC requiring follow-up:

- Demanded the military personnel to immediately and unconditionally return to their barracks and restore constitutional authority, within a maximum period of fifteen (15) days from the date of the adoption of the present Communiqué;
- Welcomed the convening of the Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government scheduled for 30 July 2023 in Abuja, Nigeria; looks forward to the outcome of the Summit; and
- Requested the Chairperson of the Commission to continue to closely monitor the situation, work in close coordination with ECOWAS and regional actors and brief the Council, as soon as possible.

The ECOWAS communique of its summit meeting of 30 July 2023 prescribed a timeline of seven (7) days for the restoration of constitutional order with the reinstatement of the deposed president. It also imposed sanctions, including closing air and land borders and the suspension of financial and economic transactions with Niger. In addition, it also threatened to take any necessary measures, including the use of force where the junta refuses to adhere to its request.

Unlike in September 2021 in the context of the coup in Guinea, the PSC took a wise decision in not putting its decision on the Niger coup on hold until the ECOWAS summit. This allowed the PSC to create the space for itself for flexible decision-making without being pinned down to surrender totally the role of deciding on the required course of policy action to sub-regional body.

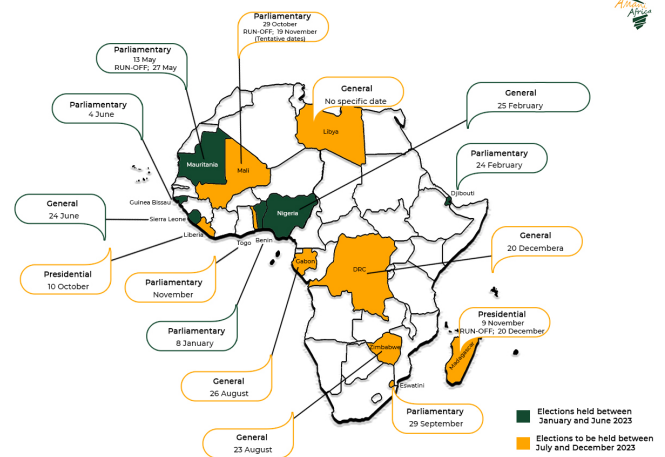
PSC REQUESTED CANDIDATES IN ELECTIONS IN MEMBER STATES TO ACCEPT ELECTION RESULTS AS OFFICIALLY PRONOUNCED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES BUT MISSES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CALL ON THOSE AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THAT ELECTIONS ARE FREE, FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND CREDIBLE

On 31 July, at its 1165th session, PSC considered and adopted the mid-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa, covering the period from January to June 2023 and the outlook of elections to be organized in the continent during the second half of the year. The Commissioner for PAPS, Bankole Adeoye, presented the chairperson's mid-year report.

AU Member States that organized elections during the first half of the year delivered statements, but, unlike previous sessions, this session did not feature Member States that are scheduled to organize elections in the second half of the year. As a result, the PSC missed the opportunity to interact with those Member States on election preparations as well as the kind of support they require from the AU.

Six Member States organized elections during the first half of the year. Nigeria and Sierra Leone held general elections, while Benin, Djibouti, Mauritania, and Guinea Bissau organized parliamentary elections. In the [communiqué](#) of the session, the PSC congratulated all these countries for organizing elections 'successfully' in a 'peaceful, transparent and credible manner'. This has become a standard language that the PSC adopts even when elections face credibility challenges. For example, by AU's own account as captured in the preliminary statement of its observation mission, Sierra Leone's 24 June general elections, for instance, were marred by 'a politically

tense environment and insecurity in some parts of the country'. In this particular instance, instead of opting for the general characterization of all elections as 'peaceful', 'transparent' and 'credible', the PSC, as part of its conflict prevention role, could have urged the stakeholders to engage in a process for finding a resolution that guarantees democratic participation and political stability in the country.



2023 African election calendar

One of the key elements of the communiqué is that PSC put a spotlight on gender perspective in elections. In that regard, the PSC not only recognized the various challenges that are hindering women's full engagement in electoral processes but also urged Member States to take the following measures:

- promote 'gender-responsive' electoral laws, policies, and strategies,
- ensure equal access to political participation of women by eliminating discriminatory practices, and
- provide targeted support for women candidates.

It further reiterated the importance of increasing the number of women in the AU Election Observation Missions and the need to pay particular attention to gender parity in that regard.

Similar to previous PSC engagements on reports of the Commission on Elections, the crucial consideration has come to be whether elections are free of violence and conducted peacefully. As a result, the assessment of the conduct of elections on the basis of democratic standards tends to be not rigorous. It is interesting in this respect that the PSC while encouraging 'candidates in elections in member states to accept

election results as officially pronounced by their respective competent authorities', missed the opportunity to highlight the deleterious impact of flawed elections for political stability and democratic consolidation and to underscore the responsibility of the 'competent authorities' to ensure that elections are conducted in full compliance with the standards of being free, fair and credible.

PSC decisions pending implementation

PSC's 1132nd session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1132 \(2023\)](#)]:

- 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.
- requested the Commission to expedite the operationalization of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions pursuant to the Declaration adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo Equatorial Guinea.

The PSC also discussed the coup in Niger and the outcome of the ECOWAS summit held on 30 July. After discussion on adopting a statement in reaction to the ECOWAS summit outcome, members opted for waiting for the 15-day timeline the PSC set in its 28 July session. However, the PSC, based on its earlier determination of the situation as coup, took the opportunity to reiterate its strong condemnation of the coup in the communique on elections.

OTHER PSC ACTIVITIES DURING THE MONTH

Besides the sessions, the PSC conducted a field mission to Burkina Faso from 22 to 27 July 2023. The delegation was led by the PSC Chairperson for July 2023, Ambassador Mohamed Lamine Thiaw, and consisted of representatives from all fifteen members of the AU PSC.

The field mission was undertaken as per Article 6(a) to (g) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of

the PSC that outlines the mandate and functions of the council, which include promoting peace, security, and stability in Africa, engaging in early warning and preventive diplomacy, conducting peace-making efforts through good offices, mediation, conciliation, and inquiry, supporting peace operations and interventions, engaging in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, undertaking humanitarian action and disaster management, and executing any other duties as assigned by the Assembly.

The objectives of the mission were to express solidarity, provide support, and reaffirm the commitment of the AU to Burkina Faso in addressing various challenges, as well as to obtain first-hand information on the political, security, socio-economic, and humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso, and to ascertain the state of progress in the implementation of the Transition Roadmap. The information gathered will be used to make evidence-based decisions on how to support the Transitional Government of Burkina Faso in addressing the challenges at hand.

The findings of the field mission report concluded that the situation in Burkina Faso is difficult, with issues in politics, security, socio-economics, and humanitarian areas. Furthermore, it indicates that although there has been progress made, the transitional process is complicated due to the security situation in the Sahel region and puts as top priorities the defeating of terrorism, improving security, and maintaining national unity to ensure a successful transition of power and the restoration of constitutional order.



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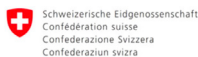
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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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Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs



ADDRESS

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