



The quest for restoring AU's agency in peace and security: Expert Policy Dialogue for informing the APSA Review and the Luanda Summit

Date: 13 – 14 July 2026

Venue: Nairobi, Kenya

"This review offers us an opportunity not just to adjust structures, but to restore political commitment, clarify roles, and reaffirm African leadership in peace, security, and governance."

Ambassador Said Djinnit

Background and Context

More than two decades after the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), Africa finds itself confronting the 'crystallization of the new era of insecurity and instability' as highlighted in our [2025 Review of the Peace and Security Council](#). The continent is witnessing the persistence and expansion of complex armed conflicts, the proliferation of violent extremist groups, recurring unconstitutional changes of government, intensified geopolitical competition, and growing humanitarian and climate-related pressures. From Sudan and the Sahel to eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, conflicts and insecurity consistently highlight how continental peace and security instruments are failing to deliver effectively and meaningfully.

While APSA remains one of the African Union's (AU) most ambitious institutional innovations and continues to provide the normative and institutional foundation for Africa's peace and security agenda, recent developments have reignited debate regarding its operational effectiveness, political influence, and strategic orientation. Increasingly, concerns are being raised beyond capacity and resource constraints about the diminishing centrality of political strategy, preventive diplomacy, and mediation within continental peace and security responses. As noted by Korir Sing'Oei, Principal Secretary in Kenya's State Department for Foreign Affairs, during the Amani Africa [High-Level Policy Dialogue](#) on the Review of APSA held on 15 December 2025, '*APSA's strength lies in diplomacy rather than hard power deterrence.*' Yet, in several major crises across the continent, the AU has struggled to show leadership (by being the first to act and proactively, by articulating compelling political strategy, and by mobilizing consensus among its member states around and support for such a strategy) in peacemaking and mediation processes. With the AU unable to seize the space for peace initiatives, various external actors have come to assume more prominent political and diplomatic roles. The

intensifying geopolitical competition over Africa is further accelerating this process of the displacement of the AU.

It is in this context that the call for the review of APSA has gained particular significance during the past few years. Following Kenya's President William Ruto's proposal at the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in February 2025, in his capacity as AU Champion for Institutional Reform, the review of the AU's peace and security framework was identified as one of the priority reform measures necessary for strengthening the Union's effectiveness. The AU Assembly subsequently mandated the establishment of a High-Level Panel of Eminent African Experts to undertake the review process. Since commencing its work in September 2025, the Panel has initiated consultations aimed at examining the adequacy, relevance, and future direction of Africa's peace and security framework.

As a follow-up to the report of the Panel, President Ruto presented a progress report in November 2025 on the sidelines of the AU-EU summit held in Luanda, Angola. The report established that the Panel of Eminent African Experts concluded, as consistently affirmed by the research and analysis of Amani Africa, that the APSA and AGA are structurally sound and aligned with the Constitutive Act of the AU. Echoing various research outputs of Amani Africa, President Ruto's report went on to point out that the limited overall impact of the APSA was attributable to 'a slow adaptation to the complex and evolving geopolitical landscape; insufficient political will often reflected in fragmentation and competing national interests; inadequate investment in shared strategies and collective action; and a weakening commitment to Pan-Africanism.' Based on the subsequent report he presented to the 39th ordinary session of the AU Assembly in February 2026, the Assembly called for, among others,

- a) Recommendation on strengthening the functional performance of the African peace and security architecture in the critical areas of mediation, dialogue, preventive diplomacy, early warning and response, counter terrorism, and peace support operations, and submit concrete recommendations, following due process, to the Assembly in January 2027; and
- b) Enhancement of preventive diplomacy and mediation

The Assembly also adopted a separate but complementary decision on the holding of an extraordinary summit on the strengthening of mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, **Assembly/AU/Dec.949(XXXIX)**. Endorsing the initiative proposed by Angola, the Assembly decided the Luanda Summit would be a strategic summit devoted exclusively to conflict prevention in Africa, with concrete, measurable, and time-bound deliverables, rather than a declarative forum. The summit is expected to take place in Luanda, Angola, in August 2026.

Against the background of the foregoing and both to contribute towards the preparation of the summit in Angola and to complement the APSA review process, Amani Africa Media and Research Services (Amani Africa) is convening an expert policy dialogue in Nairobi, Kenya, on 13 and 14 July 2026. Building on the reflections and policy discussions generated during Amani Africa's previous high-level policy dialogue on '*From the PSC Summit on Re-energising Conflict Prevention and Resolution to the Review of the APSA*',

held in December 2025, the meeting will provide a platform for deeper critical reflection and expert exchange on the ongoing APSA review process. Through engagement with an analytical paper to be presented at the meeting, examining the evolving reform agenda, emerging policy debates, and the broader strategic implications of the ongoing review process, the dialogue seeks to stimulate deeper reflection on the future role, effectiveness, and political direction of the AU's peace and security architecture. Most importantly, it aims to identify and articulate practical measures that can be taken for restoring the agency of the AU in exercising leadership in the advancement of peace and security in Africa through, among others, making preventive diplomacy and mediation the lead peace and security tools, on the basis of the primacy of politics.

Objectives of the Dialogue

The policy dialogue seeks to facilitate informed and forward-looking discussion on the future direction of APSA and the broader evolution of Africa's peace and security governance architecture. Specifically, the dialogue aims to:

- Examine the factors and dynamics limiting the effectiveness of the APSA in the various conflict situations on the continent;
- Critically assess the ongoing APSA review process and the key issues emerging from it;
- Provide a platform for experts and practitioners to interrogate and enrich the analytical paper prepared for the dialogue;
- Draw lessons from ongoing peace and security crises relevant to the revitalisation of continental peace and security mechanisms. Explore how APSA can better prioritise preventive diplomacy, mediation, and political strategy in responding to conflicts; and
- Foster broader policy engagement and strategic thinking on the implementation of prospective APSA reforms and the steps required for complementing the APSA review for restoring AU's agency in peace and security.

Expected Participants

The dialogue will bring together a select group of leading experts and stakeholders drawn from across the African peace and security policy community. Participants will include AU and REC/RM policy practitioners, scholars and researchers specialising in African peace and security issues, former diplomats, mediators and senior policy experts, as well as representatives of think tanks and civil society organisations. The meeting will also convene peacebuilding practitioners, governance experts, and representatives of international partners and diplomatic missions engaged in supporting peace, security, and governance processes on the continent.

Expected Outcomes

The dialogue is expected to contribute to:

- Deepened policy reflection on the future of APSA and Africa's peace and security governance;

- Enhanced understanding of the strategic, institutional and political dimensions of the ongoing APSA review process;
- Strengthened exchange between researchers, practitioners and policy actors on reform priorities;
- Consolidated expert inputs and recommendations on the analytical paper and the broader APSA review discourse; and
- Identification of policy pathways for strengthening the AU's role in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

Format and Methodology

The dialogue will be conducted over two days through a combination of expert presentations, moderated discussions and interactive roundtable engagements. Discussions will be informed by a background analytical paper prepared by Amani Africa and will encourage candid and solution-oriented exchanges among participants.