

# **MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

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**AMANI AFRICA**

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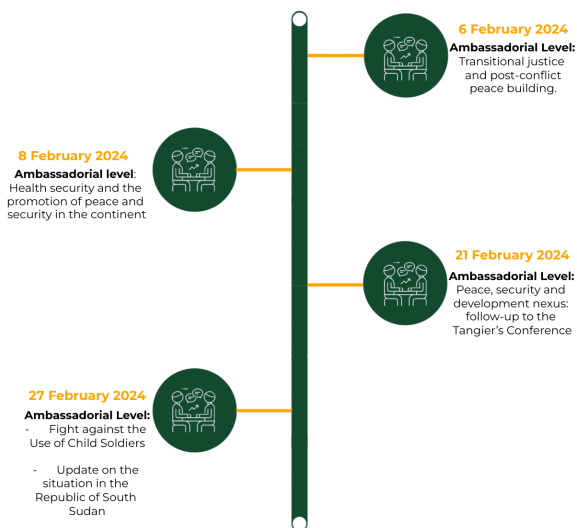
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## THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In February, under the chairship of The Kingdom of Morocco, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) had a [scheduled program of work](#) consisting of twelve sessions and an informal meeting. After multiple revisions of the programme, only five sessions were convened.

Out of the five sessions, four were focused on thematic issues, while one session addressed conflict-specific situations. All the sessions were held at the ambassadorial level.

### Activities of the AU Peace and Security Council February 2024



Over the course of the month, the Provisional Programme of Work of the PSC underwent three revisions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first revision resulted in the indefinite postponement of five sessions that were scheduled for various dates throughout February. (These sessions were on the situations in Gabon and Sudan, Migration: the co-development approach to reinforce peace and security in the continent, the situation in the Central African Republic, and AU election observation.) In addition to the postponements, the revisions shifted the dates for the sessions on several topics. The session on transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction was moved from 1 to 6 February. The session on health security was rescheduled from 7 to 8 February. The Commemoration of the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers was shifted from 12 to 27 February. The ministerial session on Connectivity: the path to strengthening peace, security and integration in the Sahel was moved from 16 to 29 February. The session on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism was rescheduled from 27 to 23 February. Finally, the session on the situation in South Sudan was moved from 29 to 27 February.

The second revision postponed the session on terrorism and violent extremism that was scheduled for 23 February by the first revision.

The third revision again postponed the session on Connectivity which was rescheduled for 29 February by the first revision.

While the outcomes of the four sessions were adopted as Communiqué, the outcome of the session on Peace, security and development nexus: follow-up to the Tangier's Conference is still pending. On average, it took 8 days for the published outcome documents to be released.<sup>2</sup>

## THE PSC WELCOMED THE DECLARATION OF THE AFRICAN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FORUM WITHOUT SUBSTANTIVE ACTIONABLE DECISION

The 1199<sup>th</sup> session held on 6 February was dedicated to the issue of transitional justice and post-conflict reconstruction and development. This session marked the second time that the Council discussed the AUTJP since its adoption in February 2019.<sup>3</sup> It was also an occasion for Morocco to share its national experience.



The 1199<sup>th</sup> Session of the PSC Source: @AUC\_PAPS

The [Communiqué](#) adopted at the session underscored elements of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP), notably its victim-centric approach. The [importance of supporting civil society organizations](#)

<sup>2</sup> This calculation excludes the outcome of the session on Peace, security and development nexus: follow-up to the Tangier's Conference.

<sup>3</sup> During the session, the PSC received a statement from Remy Ngoy Lumbu, the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and Khalid Ramli, the Director of Cooperation and International Relations of the National Human Rights Council of Morocco. Additionally, H.E. Javier Nino Perez, the Permanent Representative of the European Union to the African Union also delivered a statement.

involved in transitional justice initiatives was emphasized, as their support is crucial for ensuring participation from victims of conflict-related injustices. This includes marginalized groups and women, youth and girls in all transitional justice processes.

The policy's multi-disciplinary and integrated strategies are also mirrored in the outcome document, with the PSC emphasizing the need for reparative initiatives addressing victims' physical, psychological and economic damages. Furthermore, the urgency of addressing the structural and systemic socio-economic inequalities that often underpin conflicts was given emphasis.

With regards to countries that are coming out of conflict, the outcome of the 1199<sup>th</sup> session called for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of conflicts in Member States emerging from conflicts. It also highlighted that such a strategy demands an integration of transitional justice principles, the cultivation of a culture of peace and the fostering of tolerance for diversity directly into national educational frameworks. The Council also rightly acknowledged the need for enhanced coordination and collaboration between the AU Commission and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs).

Another aspect that was given relevant emphasis by the session in light of the situation of countries that are coming out of conflict was the adoption of indigenous solutions and a "whole-of-society approach" to transitional justice, emphasizing the utilization of traditional African methods alongside insights gleaned from the experiences of other Member States. By drawing upon past lessons and indigenous practices, nations can potentially chart a more sustainable path towards reconciliation and stability.

It is worth noting that all the various issues highlighted in the communique including the use of restorative justice, focus on socio-economic injustices, reparations and use of indigenous justice instruments are adequately and systematically canvassed in the AUTJP.

In discussing the establishment of a framework, the Council stressed the importance of supporting both the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) and the African Transitional Justice Forum (ATJF), as

continental frameworks. It is to be recalled that the annual ATJF was held in Rabat, Morocco in September 2023.

In terms of the PSC's involvement, apart from advocating for the support of these mechanisms, previous interactions with the issue reveal a lack of consistency and active engagement. Additionally, the PSC discussed the AUTJP at its 1102<sup>nd</sup> session held on 22 August 2022 and made actionable requests. At the 1199<sup>th</sup> session, despite referencing the 1102<sup>nd</sup> session in the adopted communique, the PSC did not follow up on the requests made during its previous session.

Amongst other matters, during the previous session, the PSC decided to regularize briefing on the theme as an annual meeting of the Council. Yet, not only did the PSC neglect to consider the topic in the previous year, but when the Council addressed it this year the meeting's format diverged from the previous one. Previously, member states were given the opportunity to share their experiences, lessons, best practices, challenges and prospects.

## Relevant previous PSC decisions

1102<sup>nd</sup> session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1102 \(2022\)](#)]

- The PSC requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission, to mobilize the resources required for the effective implementation of the AUTJP; and
- The PSC decided to regularize briefing on the theme as an annual meeting of the Council.

Furthermore, despite emphasizing the importance of supporting the AUTJP and AUTJF as continental frameworks, the council has not provided a comprehensive strategy for developing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

## Key actionable decision requiring follow-up

At the 1199<sup>th</sup> session, the PSC:

- Reiterated the request for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to mobilize the resources required for the effective implementation of the AUTJP.

## AU COMMISSION TASKED WITH DEVELOPING HEALTH, PEACE AND SECURITY NEXUS FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA

The 1200<sup>th</sup> session of the PSC held on 8 February was dedicated to discussing health security and the promotion of peace and security in Africa. This theme was among the agenda items proposed by Morocco, highlighting the need for a holistic approach to addressing the peace and security challenges of the continent. AU Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development Department delivered a presentation on the theme.<sup>4</sup>



The 1200<sup>th</sup> Session of the PSC Source: @AUC PAPS

In this session, PSC addressed several issues, including the nexus between health security and peace and security, and measures that should be taken at the continental, regional and national levels to enhance health security in the continent. One key outcome of the session is PSC's call for the AU Commission to urgently develop a 'Health, Peace and Security Nexus Framework for Africa,' aimed at steering policies and mechanisms at the Continental level. However, no specific timeline was stipulated for the task. The preambular part of the [Communiqué](#), adopted during the session, further acknowledges the interdependence between health security and the promotion of peace and security. As highlighted in our [pre-session analysis](#), apart from the direct impact of conflicts on the health of affected people and

<sup>4</sup> The Director General of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON), the Director of the Pasteur Institute of Morocco, and the Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation to the AU were also among the speakers during the session.

access to health care, health and peace and security intersect in other ways. It may create conditions for the emergence of health emergencies. Conflicts also undermine investment in health services and exacerbate disparities in the delivery of such services. Health is also recognized as a key component of human security, hence the importance of its promotion as part of PSC's promotion of a human security approach to peace and security.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of global cooperation. It highlighted that health issues now intersect with socio-economic, geopolitical and security concerns, requiring not only technical measures but also political negotiations and multilateral cooperation involving various stakeholders for protecting people, including those in conflict settings. Apart from highlighting the poor health infrastructure on the continent including lack of production of medicine on the continent, it also revealed inequities in the global health system, as illustrated by the global divide over access to vaccine doses and TRIPS waivers for generic production. In light of these, the PSC, in this session, explored a range of measures aimed at improving continental health security, fostering cooperation among various stakeholders, and enhancing preparedness to address future public health emergencies, thereby promoting peace and stability in the continent.

One such measure pertaining to Member States is the imperative of implementing the Lusaka Call-to-Action,<sup>5</sup> focusing on strengthening Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) in Africa. These Centres play a critical role in coordinating critical life-saving data, information and resources for better preparedness and response to public health emergencies. PSC encouraged Member States to establish multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms and foster collaboration among stakeholders in the health, security and humanitarian sectors. To this end, the PSC emphasized the importance of forming a joint task force to address the interconnected challenges of infectious diseases and security threats. While the PSC highlighted the need to ensure well-resourced public health systems, it missed the opportunity to

<sup>5</sup> The Lusaka Call-to-Action is an outcome of the High-Level Ministerial Session on Health Security in Africa, held on 16 July 2022, in Lusaka, Zambia, on the sidelines of the 47<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU and the 4<sup>th</sup> Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of the AU and the RECs.

reaffirm the rallying call of the 2001 Abuja Declaration, which urges Member States to allocate a minimum of 15% of their annual budgets to the health sector. This oversight is particularly notable considering the significant contribution of increased investment in this sector to human security and sustainable peace.

While the PSC highlighted the need to ensure well-resourced public health systems, it missed the opportunity to reaffirm the rallying call of the 2001 Abuja Declaration, which urges Member States to allocate a minimum of 15% of their annual budgets to the health sector.

At the regional level, the PSC emphasized the importance of regional collaboration in both security and health sectors. This involves establishing regional forums that convene leaders, policymakers and experts to exchange best practices, coordinate responses, and collectively strengthen the overall security and health landscape. Likewise, at the continental level, the PSC urged the AU Commission to consider establishing platforms where Member States can share experiences, lessons learned and enhance their cooperation. It also called for a unified continental approach to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR), strengthening and recovery of health systems in Africa, within the framework of a Pandemic Response Preparedness Policy and legislation of the AU. Such a continental approach can serve as powerful leverage for ensuring that Africa's voice in the global negotiation on a pandemic preparedness treaty that the World Health Organization currently champions.

Meanwhile, PSC outlined several other measures to enhance health security in the continent, including the utilization of health diplomacy as an avenue to address health challenges and foster cooperation, ensuring full adherence to international humanitarian law in conflict situations and peace support operations with particular focus on protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, strengthening early warning systems integrating health and security intelligence, promoting South-South cooperation, investing more in research and development, enhance Africa's capacity and promote its sovereignty in local manufacturing of essential health products, as well as leveraging the flexibility under the TRIPS Agreement provided for developing and least developed countries to facilitate accelerated production of generic pharmaceutical products.

## Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

At the 1200<sup>th</sup> session the PSC requested the AU Commission to:

- Develop a Health, Peace and Security Nexus Framework for Africa;
- Expedite the full operationalization of the AU Humanitarian Agency (AHA) and African Medicines Agency (AMA); and
- Explore the possibility of establishing a platform for Member States to share experience, lessons learned, and enhance cooperation on health matters and its linkages to peace and security.

## PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: FOLLOW-UP TO THE TANGIER'S CONFERENCE

The 1201<sup>st</sup> session of the PSC was dedicated to following up on the Tangier's Conference. This session represented an extension and deeper dive into the commitments stipulated in the Tangier Declaration in relation to the nexus between peace, security humanitarian and developmental programmes.

The main intention behind the convening of the session is to contemplate the conference's outcomes. The Tangier Process is an annual AU Conference held in Tangier, Morocco, is a continuation of the commitments made in the Tangier Declaration. However, the conference did not take place in 2023. The Conference is primarily attended by the 15 members of the AU PSC, with additional states invited on a case-by-case basis and mutual agreement. This event, taking place every October, emphasizes the interplay between Peace, Security and Development is attended by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank). The primary objective of this conference is the practical implementation of development policies, concentrating on "nexus projects," which are large-scale initiatives across African nations, regions, and border areas.

In terms of the effectiveness of the process, it should be noted that the absence of a consensus within the PSC appears to be the key factor inhibiting the production of an outcome document on the session. This disagreement primarily pertains to the issue of ensuring that the Tangier process is open and inclusive to all AU member states. The diverging views on this matter have hindered the progression of discussions and consequently, the formulation of a final document reflecting the session's outcomes.

## PSC EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLISTIC APPROACHES TO PUT AN END TO THE RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS

The 1202<sup>nd</sup> session of the PSC convened on 27 February was dedicated to the 'fight against the use of child soldiers'.<sup>6</sup> The outcome of the session was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).



The 1202<sup>nd</sup> Session of the PSC Source: @AUC\_PAPS

One of the elements incorporated in the outcome of the 1202<sup>nd</sup> session is the importance of adopting 'a holistic and plural approach' for the prevention and fight against recruitment of child soldiers. In terms of taking preventive steps to curb the rampant use of children for various purposes in armed conflicts, a critical aspect underscored in the communiqué of

<sup>6</sup> Those who delivered a briefing and made statements during the session were Robert Nanima, Special Rapporteur on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (CAAC) and member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) and the representatives of UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Save the Children and Abdelkader Filali, Moroccan scholar. In her capacity as co-chair of the Africa Platform on CAAC, Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU also made a statement.

this session is the need to look into a more sustainable solution, particularly through comprehensively addressing structural root causes of conflicts. Another relevant approach highlighted as instrumental for the prevention of recruitment of children is an investment in education, referred also in light of its link to the AU theme for 2024.

Another important aspect of adopting a comprehensive and holistic approach for the fight against recruitment of children in armed conflicts that received attention at the 1202<sup>nd</sup> meeting is the significance of mainstreaming child protection into early warning and prevention mechanisms; in peacebuilding processes; in post-conflict reconstruction as well as in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes.

While the discussions of the PSC on the recruitment of child soldiers in earlier years were limited to concerns revolving around recruitment by state actors and non-state armed groups, the more recent PSC meetings on this topic have seen the increasing use of children by terrorist groups in the continent. In addition to exploiting children for orchestrating attacks including through spying, direct fighting, or as suicide bombers, terrorist groups such as Boko Haram have been known to abduct children for their use in many other supporting roles as well as for sexual slavery. The recruitment of children by terrorist actors is also one means of indoctrination at an early and impressionable age.

### Relevant previous PSC decisions:

1110<sup>th</sup> session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1110 \(2022\)](#)]: noting the growing use of children by terrorist groups, the PSC requested the AU Commission to 'undertake a study on the specific impact of terrorism on children and to submit the report of the study for consideration by the Council, as soon as possible'.

The 1202<sup>nd</sup> session's reference to the prevention of detention and prosecution of children for their alleged involvement with armed groups and terrorist actors was also an essential component of child protection. Realising this requires, among others, sustained training and capacitating of state actors, particularly the military and law enforcement bodies, on the basic principles of protection of children and children's rights.

The PSC also reiterated its repeated requests for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a Special Envoy on CAAC.

### Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

At the 1202<sup>nd</sup> session, the PSC requested the AU Commission to:

- Review the DDR Guidelines for children in line with the evolving context of the continent;
- Develop a Continental Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework to address the psychosocial wellbeing of children in conflict settings currently and in the past;
- Operationalise Child Protection Architecture; and
- Develop a best practice document of reference to prevent and end the recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed groups.

## AS UNCERTAINTY LOOMS, PSC REQUESTS THE TRILATERAL MECHANISM TO FACILITATE CONSENSUS ON HOLDING OF ELECTIONS WITHIN THE TRANSITIONAL TIMELINE

The 1202<sup>nd</sup> session of the PSC that was held on 27 February considered the situation in South Sudan. The convening comes days after the AU Ad Hoc High-Level Committee (C5) for South Sudan held a ministerial-level consultative meeting on the margins of the 37<sup>th</sup> AU Summit on 16 February.<sup>7</sup>

As South Sudan prepares for the upcoming elections in December 2024, a primary aspect of the PSC session focused on election preparations. In this regard, the

<sup>7</sup> During the session, the PSC received briefings and statements from, the AU Commission for South Sudan and Head of AU Liaison Office in Juba, Ambassador Biswara; Ambassador David Dang Kong, Charge d'Affairs of the Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Addis Ababa; Ambassador Dr. Smail Wais, Representative of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and Major General (Rtd) Charles Gituai, Interim Chairperson of the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC).

PSC in the [communique](#) it adopted highlighted the achievements made by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) since its last convening by commending RTGoNU for allocating the necessary budget for electoral processes, particularly for the institutions playing a key role in the election process. Although the PSC indicated the need to 'mobilise [other] resources for the institutions that are pivotal for the elections' it is to be noted that the funding will primarily be drawn from the government's budget. The funding needs to be allocated to all three institutions responsible, the National Elections Commission (NEC), the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) and the Political Parties Council (PPC); however, the majority of the funds will predominantly go towards the National Elections Commission. With only four months into the appointment of new leadership and 9 months ahead of the elections, the NEC will need both financial and technical support to ensure a credible election is held if not postponed.

Other matters relating to elections that were key highlights from the PSC convening include the call from the AU PSC to expedite the deployment of the Necessary United Force (NUF) ideally before the elections. The proper deployment of the NUF ahead of elections is anticipated to guarantee a conducive environment for elections. This request is not novel as the PSC had reiterated a similar request in its past session in November. However, what makes this request distinctive is its servers as a follow-up to the call made by the C5 during their convening on the margins of the AU Summit. In the [press statement](#) released, the C5 emphasized the need to mobilize support 'towards the implementation of the transitional security arrangements, including expediting the training and deployment of the Necessary United Forces (NUFs), police and security forces'. In this regard, the PSC requested the AU Commission to airlift the military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to South Sudan to aid the training and deployment of the NUF'. Follow-up communication on this request indicates that a report was submitted to the AU PSC from a recent [visit](#) to Juba undertaken by the PAPS Department. This report resulted in two requests, one to support the NUF via normal military equipment that will aid in training the NUF without providing arms. Secondly, the report also requested technical and logistical support for the National Elections



Commission including providing exposure to the NEC Commissioner. This may be conducted through the invitation of the NEC Commissioners to upcoming AU election observation missions until South Sudan holds its election in Dec 2024.

While the overall tone of the deliberations and the PSC's communique is premised on the successful holding of elections, the lack of adequate progress in implementing key transitional tasks and the resultant uncertainty on whether elections could be held under the circumstances given the limited time left was factored in as highlighted in our analysis. Thus, the PSC specifically tasked the Trilateral Mechanism 'to work with all South Sudanese stakeholders with a view to reaching a consensus on the organization of transparent and credible (elections) within the stipulated transitional timelines.' However, the PSC missed the opportunity to clarify how the parties can handle the situation in the event of a lack of progress in holding elections.

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In addition to election preparation, other matters that attracted attention in the PSC session included the remaining elements of the transitional process. To expedite outstanding transitional tasks of the Agreement, the PSC highlighted three key areas in need of enhanced developments: DDR (Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) & Security Sector Reform (SSR); financial assistance to the agreement; and the Hybrid Court of South Sudan. Comparable to the previous communique, the PSC reiterated the importance of comprehensive DDR and SSR programs. The C5 during their convening suggested the deployment of technical experts to support in establishment of a comprehensive program, however, the PSC did not take any decision that would include the participation of technical experts in this process. It did however encourage the parties involved in the process (Trilateral Mechanism and the unity government) to work within the framework of the Joint Task Force to support the DDR, SSR, and constitutional-making process. Financially,

there hasn't been much advancement on the PSC's previous [request](#) for the 'establishment of a 'Special Reconstruction Fund (SRF) and Board of Special Reconstruction Fund (BSRF) for the implementation of the agreement'. The session reiterated its call for the establishment of a special funding mechanism, that would support the implementation of outstanding tasks of the Agreement and for the trilateral parties to support the pledging conference for these funds.

One significant aspect of the Agreement that is continuously neglected is the establishment of the Hybrid court. In this regard, the PSC has previously welcomed the efforts made by the RTGoNU on the approval of the Bills on the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH) and the Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA) per the agreement. However, the status of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan remains stagnant. In this regard, the PSC highlighted its anticipation of the ratification and implementation of the CTRH and the CRA and called for the unity government to work closely with the AU Commission and the Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC), to 'expedite the development of a roadmap for the establishment of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan (HCSS)'. Regarding additional matters that remain a challenge for South Sudan notably armed groups not signatory to the peace agreement, the PSC urged the actors to engage in the Nairobi peace process in order to facilitate their participation in the transitional arrangements before the elections. This request comes after the recent efforts by President Ruto of the Republic of Kenya who recently took over the Rome process engaging holdout oppositions and requested their participation in an inclusive mediation process. The humanitarian condition that has worsened in South Sudan as a result of the influx of half a million Sudanese was also a point of concern for the PSC, in this regard they reiterated the need to avail of the required funding for the humanitarian efforts in the country.

### Key Actionable decisions requiring follow up:

- Requested the Trilateral Taskforce to work with all South Sudanese stakeholders with a view to reaching a consensus on the organization of transparent and credible elections within the stipulated transitional timelines; and in this respect, emphasizes the importance of expediting all remaining transitional

tasks;

- Requested the Trilateral to facilitate the convening of the South Sudan Pledging Conference to raise money to resource the Fund and to support the implementation of the peace agreement; and
- Requested the AU Commission to airlift the military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to South Sudan to aid the training and deployment of the NUF.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC FOR THE MONTH**

The PSC presented its report on its activities and the state of peace and security to the AU Assembly during the 37<sup>th</sup> AU summit in accordance with Article 7 of the PSC Protocol.



## MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

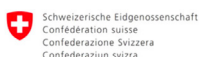
### ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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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