

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

January , 2026

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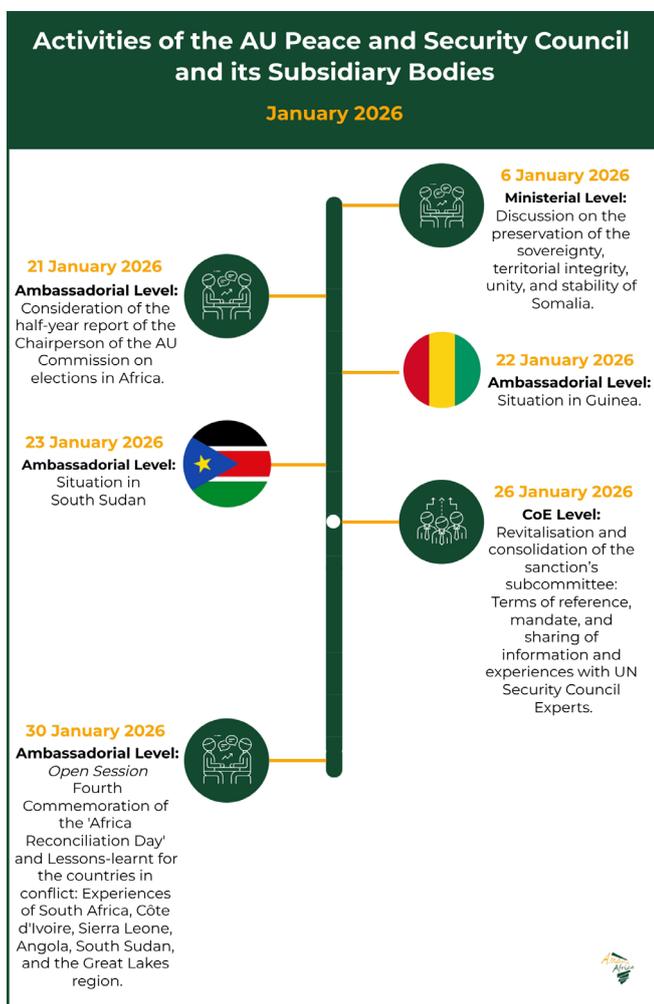
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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In January, under the chairship of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) had a scheduled Provisional Programme of Work (PPoW) consisting of six substantive sessions. After the revision of the programme, five sessions were held. Out of the five, three focused on country-specific situations while the rest addressed thematic issues. Apart from one session held at the ministerial level, the rest were held at the level of ambassadors. There was also one open session during the month.



Over the course of the month, the PSC PPoW underwent three revisions. The first revision saw the addition of an emergency meeting to the programme, on 6 January, on the 'Preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and stability of the Federal Republic of Somalia,' following Israel's unilateral recognition of Somaliland.

Similarly, on 22 January, the Council added another meeting to consider the 'Situation in the Republic of Guinea.' It also saw the postponement of the session on the 'Consideration of the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa,' which was scheduled for 23 January.

The second revision saw the session on the 'Situation in South Sudan' being postponed from 19 January to 20 January. However, the third revision further postponed the session on South Sudan to 23 January. Another change from the third revision moved the session on the 'Consideration of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa' from 21 January to 26 January. In addition, the meeting on 'Revitalisation and consolidation of the Sanctions Sub-Committee: Terms of reference, mandate, and sharing of information and experiences with UN Security Council Experts' scheduled for 28 January, was postponed to 29 January, to happen at the sub-committee level from the permanent representatives' level. It was, however, eventually postponed to a later date.

The third revision saw the indefinite postponement of the session on 'Illegal exploitation of natural resources and proliferation of weapons in Africa as aggravating factors in conflicts: prospects for strengthening control mechanisms by the AU, RECs/RMs and Member States' scheduled for 29 January.

All the sessions adopted communiqués as outcome documents alongside a report for the session of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa.

PSC STRONGLY CONDEMNS ISRAEL'S RECOGNITION OF SOMALILAND, CALLS FOR ITS REVOCATION

On 6 January, the PSC convened a ministerial-level meeting, its 1324th session, on the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and stability of Somalia.¹ The session was not originally envisaged in the Council's Programme of Work but was convened against the backdrop of Israel's recognition, on 26 December 2025, of Somaliland—a self-declared breakaway region of Somalia—as an independent state. The decision to convene the session at a ministerial level also underscores the weight the Council attached to this development.



Figure 1: 1324th Meeting of the PSC on the 'Preservation of the Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, Unity, and Stability of the Federal Republic of Somalia,' 6 January 2026. (Source: X [@AUC_PAPS](#))

The recognition prompted widespread condemnation from a range of actors and has intensified geopolitical contestation in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. This development unfolds against an already volatile regional backdrop: the protracted conflict in Sudan; the Saudi Arabia–UAE

¹ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of DRC and Chair of the PSC for January, Thérèse Kayikwamba Wagner, presided over the session. The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, delivered the introductory statement. Representatives of Somalia, as the concerned state, and Djibouti, in its capacity as Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), were also among the speakers.

rupture; persistent tensions over the Nile waters; and rising inter-state tensions in the Horn. For the AU, the move represents what the Chairperson of the Commission described in his 26 December 2025 [statement](#) as a 'dangerous precedent.' The Chairperson cautioned that the recognition could have serious implications for continental peace and stability — a warning that was reiterated during the 1324th session.

The [communiqué](#) adopted at the 1324th session was equally unequivocal. The Council not only condemned and rejected the unilateral recognition of Somaliland but also called for its immediate revocation. It further underscored that 'no actor has the authority or standing to alter the territorial configuration of an AU Member State,' and that any such declaration is 'null, void, and without legal effect under international law.' The Council also called upon Member States and international partners to reaffirm Somalia's sovereignty and unity, while urging the AU Commission and the East African Community (EAC) to continue supporting and facilitating an inclusive political dialogue aimed at the peaceful resolution of the matter relating to Somaliland.

Key Actionable Decisions Requiring Follow-up

The PSC requested:

- the AU Commission, in close collaboration with IGAD and the EAC, to continue to support and facilitate an inclusive political dialogue for the peaceful resolution of challenges facing the country (as it relates to the Somaliland situation).

Recent Relevant Amani Africa Publications

- [Emergency Session on Israel's Recognition of Somaliland](#), *Insights on the PSC*, 6 January 2026.

PSC'S LIFTING OF GUINEA'S SUSPENSION DELT FURTHER BLOW TO ACDEG'S ARTICLE 25(4) BANNING COUP MAKERS FROM ELECTIONS

On 22 January, at its 1325th session, the PSC met to consider the political transition in Guinea.² The session was convened in the context of Guinea's presidential election of 28 December 2025 and the subsequent requests by the [Chairperson of the AU Commission](#) and the [AU Election Observation Mission](#) to lift the AU suspension, on the grounds that the election marked the formal conclusion of the transition process that began after the military coup of September 2021.

As expected, the PSC, after welcoming the 'successful' organisation of the 28 December 2025 presidential election and congratulating Mamadi Doumbouya on winning the election, decided to lift Guinea's suspension from participation in AU activities—a suspension that had been in place since September 2021. The Council also invited Guinea to immediately resume its participation in AU activities.

What is troubling in the [communiqué](#) adopted during this session is its silence on the relevance of Article 25(4) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), which clearly prohibits perpetrators of unconstitutional changes of government from participating in elections held to restore democratic order. Mamadi

² The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, delivered the introductory statement. Harold Saffa, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, made statement representing the Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Morissanda Kouyaté, Minister of Foreign Affairs for African Integration and Guineans Established Abroad, also delivered a statement.

Doumbouya—who led the 2021 coup—participated in, and won, the presidential election, in direct contravention of Article 25(4). Yet, the Council did not even use the occasion to express the continuing validity of Article 25(4) of ACDEG. This omission, along with the endorsement of the legitimisation through election of the ascent to power by coup, represents yet another instance of the relegation of this provision to increasing irrelevance.

This pattern of sidelining Article 25(4) has not gone unnoticed. It was criticised by the outgoing Chairperson of the AU, João Lourenço of Angola, during his [address](#) at the 39th AU Summit. He cautioned that constitutional order cannot be considered restored where coup perpetrators participate in transitional elections.



'We are witnessing the emergence of new phenomena that should not be legitimised and endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council.

When we talk about the need to restore constitutional order after power has been seized by unconstitutional means, we are not saying that it is restored as long as the perpetrators of the coup d'état hold elections and get themselves elected.

This is a way of whitewashing an act that lacks legitimacy, which, unfortunately, is beginning to be seen as normal and therefore acceptable, when in reality it threatens the foundations of our principles and the peace and security of the continent.

This cannot become a new normal way of gaining power, because it would be an indirect way of encouraging coups d'état, which are then whitewashed and everything is fine.'

H.E. João Lourenço, President of Angola and Chairperson of the AU, at the opening ceremony of the 39th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, 14 February 2026.

Key Actionable Decisions Requiring Follow-up:

The PSC:

- Requested the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Centre to promote economic recovery and to holistically address the structural root causes of the September 2021 unconstitutional change of government.
- Directed the AU Commission to continue engaging and supporting other AU Member States in political transition with a view to expediting the completion of their political transition processes and facilitating the swift return to constitutional order.

Recent Relevant Amani Africa Publications

- [Consideration of the Situation in Guinea, Insights on the PSC](#), 21 January 2026.
- [Can AU's Anti-Coup Norm Survive a Scenario in Which the Military Leaders of All Suspended Countries Run for Elections Following the Precedent in Chad and Gabon?](#), Solomon Dersso, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 10 April 2025.
- [Coup d'état Continues to Surge as the African Union and Regional Bodies Inadvertently Make Coup-Making Profitable Again](#), Solomon Dersso and Biruk Shewadeg, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 24 December 2025.

PSC URGES DIALOGUE 'TO PREVENT TOTAL COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE PROCESS'

On 23 January 2026, at its 1326th meeting, the PSC convened to receive an 'updated briefing on the situation in the Republic of South Sudan,' and adopted a [communiqué](#)

as the outcome of the meeting. This meeting comes amid growing concern that South Sudan is in the process of relapsing back to full-scale war, as starkly highlighted in Amani Africa's [briefing](#) to the UN Security Council and the [Insight](#) prepared for the session.



Figure 2: PSC 1326th meeting, 'Updated Briefing on the Situation in the Republic of South Sudan,' 23 January 2026 (Source: X [@AUC_PAPS](#))

The session's deliberation and the communiqué implicitly recognised that the situation in South Sudan reached a point of risking the **total collapse** of the peace process. In so doing, this also acknowledges pre-existing erosion of the peace process in the country. However, the alarming risk of total collapse did not trigger the strong and urgent collective action such a situation warrants. Despite the gravity of the situation and the track record of the parties, the PSC left the prevention of the collapse to the goodwill of the parties in urging them 'to recommit to dialogue and consensus building.'

Notwithstanding the foregoing limitation, the session and the outcome, echoing earlier sessions on South Sudan, highlighted the core issues of the breakdown of relations between the leaders of the parties' signatories to the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the lack of

adherence to the R-ARCSS. As such and in apparent signal of its rejection of the unilateral dismissal of members of the national unity government by President Salva Kiir during 2025, the PSC called on the Government ‘to reconstitute itself as per the provisions of the R-ARCSS and to expedite the implementation of outstanding transitional tasks in the letter and spirit of the R-ARCSS, and to adhere strictly to its provisions, including upholding the supremacy of the Agreement.’

Additionally, and most significantly, the PSC retained its focus that the resolution of the current crisis and arresting South Sudan’s ongoing descent to full-scale civil war necessarily includes the release of the leader of SPLM-IO and first vice president Riek Machar and other political detainees as a major step for the return to implementation of the R-ARCSS. It thus underlined ‘the need for sustained and harmonised engagements by IGAD, AU and UN with the RTGoNU to keep the fragile peace process alive by ensuring an amicable resolution of the current political and security impasse, including the release of the First Vice President and all other political detainees in order to facilitate meaningful dialogue and a return to the implementation of the R-ARCSS.’ However, it provided for neither timelines nor a follow-up system on getting these measures delivered.

Echoing key elements highlighted in the [analysis](#) produced on the 1326th session of the PSC and Amani Africa’s [briefing](#) to the UN Security Council on 11 November 2025, including the prompt deployment of a high-level preventive diplomacy initiative, the PSC reiterated its request ‘for the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently appoint a High Representative for South Sudan to support the peace process.’

Relevant Previous PSC Decisions

1308th PSC Meeting, 28 October 2025 [[PSC/PR/COMM.1308.1 \(2025\)](#)]

The PSC:

- Requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to continue advancing peace efforts by leveraging his good offices and the Panel of the Wise, in close coordination with IGAD’s ongoing efforts.
- Reiterated its request to the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint an AU High Representative to support the implementation of the outstanding aspects of the Revitalised Peace Agreement, and to further enhance the institutional capacity of the AU Mission in South Sudan/Liaison Office in Juba to enable it to more effectively deliver on its mandate.

1297th PSC Meeting, 15 August, 2025 [[PSC/PR/COMM.1297.1 \(2025\)](#)]

The PSC:

- Requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to urgently appoint an AU High-Level Representative to South Sudan, preferably a former Head of State, to maintain regular engagements with the South Sudanese authorities and other key stakeholders aimed at addressing the challenges in the country with the view to working with the Parties towards the conclusion of the Transition

Similar to the foregoing, reflecting a theme from Amani Briefing to UNSC and in apparent step to deal with the Nasir incident as a trigger of the current conflagration, constituting a possible major violation of the R-ARCSS, the PSC both affirmed the need for using the mechanism envisaged in the R-ARCSS for addressing such violations and called for its activation. Thus, it emphasised ‘the urgent need for the RTGoNU with the support of the AU Commission, to

expedite the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan to investigate, and if necessary, to prosecute all those found to be responsible for any crimes committed during the transitional period.'

Unless the AU, in concert with the UN and IGAD, supported by the C5, puts in place a process for ensuring the implementation of the foregoing measures envisaged in the PSC communiqué, it is unlikely that even the minimum conditions necessary for the holding of elections could be put in place before the election timeline of December 2026. This reflects R-JMEC's [warnings](#) that timely elections would be 'extremely difficult' without urgent corrective action.

In view of the foregoing, it is important not to entertain the idea of separating the convening of elections from the peace process and the R-ARCSS, as the President Kiir-led government seem to be inclined to do. This entails that PSC's emphasis 'that priority should be given to the organisation of elections by December 2026 in order to meet the aspiration of the South Sudanese people in ending the transitional period by February 2027' requires careful consideration. It is thus worth heeding the counsel in the [briefing](#) to the UNSC that efforts for restoring peace in South Sudan 'should also seek to avoid the December 2026 elections from plunging the country into conflict, given the fragility of the context in South Sudan and recent trends on the continent, in which political polarisation erupts into destabilising political crises and violent confrontation during elections.'

Key Actionable Decisions Requiring Follow-up

The PSC:

- Requested the AU Commission to continue providing technical support, including in the fields of disarmament, demobilisation and reinte-

gration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), constitution-making, transitional justice, population census, among others, to facilitate expeditious implementation of all outstanding transitional tasks.

- Reiterated the request for the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently appoint a High Representative for South Sudan to support the peace process.
- Reiterated the request for the AU Commission to provide the necessary resources to enable the AULO in South Sudan to effectively implement its mandate.

Recent Relevant Amani Africa Publications

- [Briefing on the situation in South Sudan, Insights on the PSC](#), 22 January 2026.
- [Amani Africa tells the UNSC to deploy preventive measures with urgency and decisiveness to pull South Sudan from the brink](#), *Amani Africa Briefing to the UNSC*, 11 November 2025.
- [Update on the Situation in South Sudan, Insights on the PSC](#), 27 October 2025.

PSC CELEBRATES THE HOLDING OF ELECTIONS AS QUALITY OF ELECTIONS CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE, EXPOSING SERIOUS FLAWS IN PSC OVERSIGHT

The 1327th meeting of the PSC considered and adopted the Half-Year Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections conducted between July and December 2025, alongside an outlook for elections scheduled for the first half of 2026. The session continued the PSC's established

practice, mandated since its 424th session of periodic review of electoral developments on the continent, reinforcing elections as a standing governance and peace-and-security issue. In the [Communique](#) adopted by the session, the PSC reaffirmed elections as a stabilising instrument within the AU's peace and security framework. This mirrors broader institutional tendencies within the AU that favour procedural benchmarks over democratic substance, **a pattern that effectively positions the Union as a reporter of elections rather than an active guarantor of democratic quality.**



Figure 3: 1327th Meeting of the PSC on the 'Consideration of the Half-Year Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Elections in Africa: July to December 2025 and Outlook for 2026,' 26 January 2026. (Source: X [@AUC_PAPS](#)).

In line with the Commission's report, the PSC commended Member States that organised elections during the reporting period, which took place in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Malawi, the Seychelles, Somalia, and Tanzania. Strangely, both the Chairperson's report and the PSC session and outcome did not make reference to the major issues highlighted in some of the election observation mission reports, most notably Tanzania, a blatant omission. Similarly, PSC's celebration of administrative execution risks obscuring deeper democratic deficits, including restricted political competition, repression, and shrinking civic space that were evident across multiple polls conducted in the second half of 2025 and, in several cases, explicitly flagged in the preliminary findings

of the AU's own election observation missions.

As seen in elections conducted in the second half of 2025, some incumbents competed in environments where opposition participation was curtailed, media landscapes were skewed, and oversight institutions lacked independence. While such deficits are acknowledged in AUEOM technical findings, they are largely absent from PSC political messaging as they were not reflected in the Chairperson's report. The lack of reference to these issues in the Chairperson's report deprived the PSC of the basis for crafting political messaging fitting for such deficiencies. **The level of decline in PSC's approach to its mandate on advancing democratic standards, including through promoting free, fair and credible elections, is the fact that the consideration of the Chairperson's report does not provide an opportunity for the head of the election observation to brief the PSC and for the PSC to pronounce itself on the findings of the AU election observation missions. This constitutes a major methodological and PSC's supervisory role flaw.**

The PSC's explicit commendation of Guinea for organising a constitutional referendum and presidential election, framed as restoring constitutional order, is among the most consequential decisions of the session. This position closely mirrors the Council's earlier endorsement of Gabon's post-coup elections and signals the further consolidation of a post-coup electoral normalisation model. Such an approach risks transforming elections from safeguards against unconstitutional power into instruments for its validation. While the AU's frameworks allow suspension after coups and reinstatement following elections, the practical effect has often been to foreground electoral procedure at

the expense of normative imperatives that should safeguard democratic substance.

If Guinea illustrates the PSC's accommodation of military-led transitions, Guinea-Bissau exposes an equally troubling blind spot, as the PSC's engagement on elections, marked by generalised appeals for constitutionalism, zero tolerance for coups, and respect for legal frameworks, appears conspicuously detached from one of the gravest electoral violations on the continent in 2025. The Council's communiqué avoided any direct reference to Guinea-Bissau, opting instead for generic appeals against unconstitutional changes of government and election-related violence. This omission of Guinea-Bissau's electoral violation sounds like a political retreat in the face of elite complicity rather than a case of insufficient information or delayed response.

Yet, in a show of ritualistic performance, the PSC once again underscored the importance of early warning, preventive diplomacy, and synergy between election observation missions and political engagement. It called for strengthened continental early warning systems and timely deployment of preventive diplomacy missions.

In view of these underwhelming dynamics of AU election observation processes, it is curious that the PSC calls for the allocation of further financial support for election observation.

Key Actionable Decisions Requiring Follow-up

The PSC:

- Directed the Commission to continue providing election-related technical capacity building support to all Member States, particularly those that are currently in political transition.
- Reiterated the appeal to the Perma-

nent Representatives Committee (PRC) to allocate adequate financial resources to support election-related activities of the AU Commission Electoral Support Unit to enable it to more effectively and efficiently fulfil its mandate of supporting electoral processes in the Member States, including through the provision of technical assistance and the deployment of AU Election Observation Missions.

- Requested the AU Commission to further strengthen the continental early warning system and to continue timely deployment of preventive diplomacy missions alongside the AU Election Observation Missions, and to also continue enhancing closer synergies between Member States, RECs/RMs, and other AU Organs to ensure seamless deployment and conduct of AU Election Observation Missions.

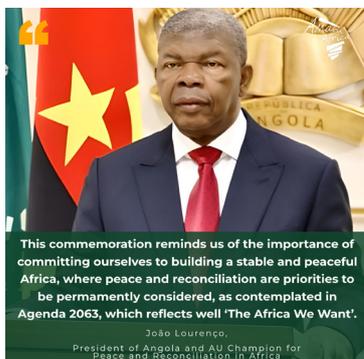
Recent Relevant Amani Africa Publications

- [Consideration of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa, Insights on the PSC](#), 26 January 2026.
- [Guinea-Bissau, not Benin, the real test of the efficacy of ECOWAS's response to coups](#), *Ideas Indaba*, 13 December 2025.

PSC MARKS THE FOURTH AFRICAN DAY OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

The last substantive session of the PSC was its 1328th meeting held on 30 January, which commemorated the fourth African Day of Peace and Reconciliation. This meeting also featured lessons learned for the countries in conflict, with experiences from South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Angola, South Sudan, and the Great Lakes region.³

From the [communiqué](#) it adopted following the meeting, Council welcomed the fourth Commemoration of the Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation, underscoring the vital need for sustained efforts to foster a culture of tolerance, justice, and forgiveness, particularly in nations emerging from violent conflict. The Council emphasised that meaningful intercultural dialogue is essential for building mutual understanding across diverse ethnic, religious, and political landscapes. In this context, the PSC commended the personal commitment of João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of Angola and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation, alongside the leadership of Faure Gnassingbé of Togo for his mediation efforts in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In his [statement](#), President João Lourenço stated that, ‘This commemoration reminds us of the importance of committing ourselves to building a stable and peaceful Africa, where peace and reconciliation are priorities to be permanently considered, as contemplated in Agenda 2063, which reflects well ‘The Africa We Want.’



Gonçalves Lourenço, President of Angola, who is also the AU Chairperson and AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa. An introductory statement was also made by Patience Chiradza, Director for Governance and Conflict Prevention, on behalf of Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security. Additionally, Welile Nhlapo, Senior Political Advisor to the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) made a presentation, followed by statements from the representatives of Angola, Sierra Leone and South Africa, as well as the statements from the representatives of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

To break the cycle of violence, the Council urged all parties to ongoing conflicts to prioritise the supreme interests of their citizens by embracing dialogue as the only viable path to stability. A significant portion of this effort involves long-term societal shifts, leading the PSC to reiterate its call for Member States to integrate peace education into national curricula. By targeting the youth and ensuring the meaningful participation of both women and young people in peace processes, the Council aims to build a foundation for lasting national reconciliation. Furthermore, states were encouraged to share best practices for overcoming deep polarisation, with specific praise for Angola, Sierra Leone, and South Africa for their contributions to continental learning.



Figure 4: The Fourth Commemoration of the African Day of Peace and Reconciliation, 30 January 2026.
(Source: X [@AUC_PAPS](#))

The PSC also highlighted the structural and systemic requirements for peace, stressing the importance of strengthening the Continental Early Warning System and preventive diplomacy. Success in these areas, the Council noted, is inextricably linked to inclusive governance, the eradication of impunity, and the promotion of accountability. There was a particular emphasis on utilising tried and tested traditional justice mechanisms—such as Rwanda’s Gacaca system and the Truth and Reconciliation processes in South Africa and Sierra Leone—to heal societies. Member States were further urged to adopt a ‘whole-

of-government, whole-of-society' approach to address the root causes of conflict, including governance deficits and regional inequalities.

Finally, the Council commended the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Centre for its role in enhancing state resilience and called for deeper synergies between the Centre and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. The PSC concluded by reaffirming that the consolidation of democracy, the defence of constitutionalism, and a steadfast respect for human rights are paramount.

Relevant Previous PSC Decisions

1258th Session, [[PSC/PR/COMM.1258 \(2025\)](#)], 31 January 2025:

The PSC:

- Called for the integration of the Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation into regional and national frameworks to ensure that its observance is deeply embedded within localised peace and reconciliation efforts.

Recent Relevant Amani Africa Publications

- Commemoration of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation, [Consideration of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa](#), *Insights on the PSC*, 29 January 2026.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES DURING THE MONTH

The PSC's Committee of Experts (CoE) was scheduled to convene virtually on two occasions during the month. From 14 to 16 January, the CoE was supposed to meet to consider the Report on the Activities of the PSC and the State of Peace and Security in

Africa; however, the session was postponed to the following month.

In addition, the CoE was scheduled to convene on 26 and 27 January to discuss the revitalisation and consolidation of the PSC Sanctions Sub-Committee; however, the session did not also take place as planned.

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