

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

JANUARY
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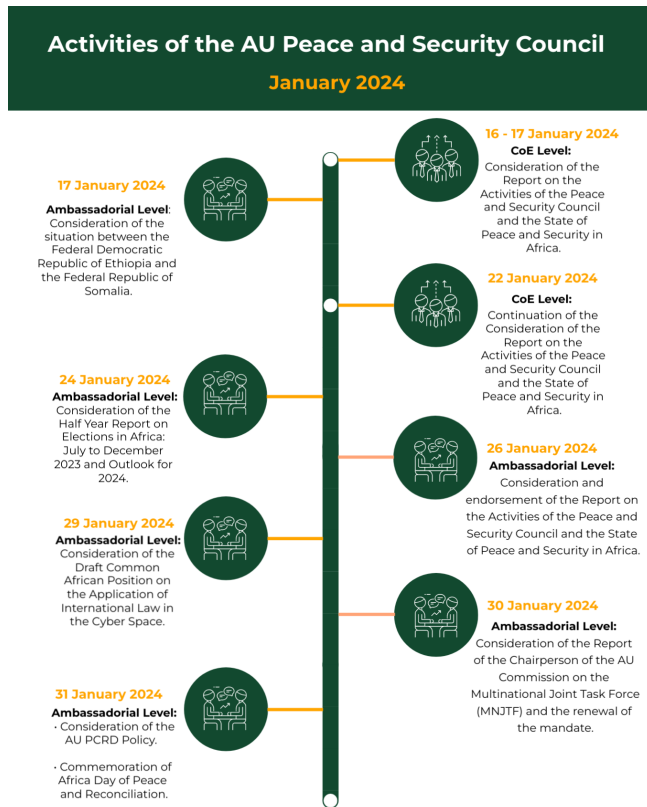
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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In January, under the chairship of Ghana, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) had a [scheduled program of work](#) consisting of five sessions and a field mission to Tigray. After the introduction of a new agenda item in the course of the month, six sessions were convened.

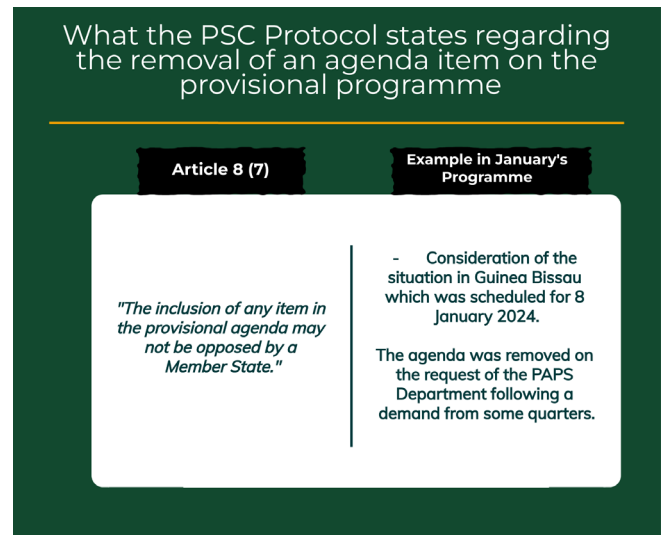


Out of the six sessions, five were focused on thematic issues, while one session addressed conflict-specific situations. Additionally, the PSC also held a commemoration of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation. All the sessions were held at the ambassadorial level.

Throughout the month, the Provisional Programme of Work (PPoW) of the PSC underwent six revisions.¹ The first revision resulted in the indefinite postponement of the session on the situation in Guinea Bissau that was scheduled for 8 January.

¹ Apart from the PSC sessions, the two meetings of the Committee of Experts (CoE) that were scheduled to consider the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa were rescheduled. The first meeting, originally planned for 9 and 10 January, was moved to 16 and 17 January. Similarly, the second meeting, initially scheduled for 16 and 17 January, was postponed to 22 January.

The second revision also postponed the field mission to Tigray initially scheduled for 25 January and a session scheduled for 31 January for the updated briefing on the peace process in Ethiopia, as well as the consideration of the report of the PSC on its field mission to the Tigray region of Ethiopia. It should be noted that this is the second time that the PSC scheduled a field mission to Tigray and was unable to undertake the mission. The first time such a mission was planned as part of the program of work of the PSC was in February 2023, when the PSC was chaired by South Africa, host of the Pretoria Peace Agreement.



The third revision was the addition of an emergency session on 17 January on the situation between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia. This session was included in the programme in response to the request from Somalia and the tensions that emerged after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Somaliland and Ethiopia on 1 January 2024.

The fourth revision rescheduled the session on the Consideration and endorsement of the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, initially scheduled for 23 January, to 26 January. Additionally, the Consideration of the Half Year Report on Elections in Africa (July to December 2023 and Outlook for 2024) was rescheduled from 25 January to 24 January.

The fifth revision of the programme was the inclusion of an agenda item on the updates on the selection process of the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs). Despite this meeting being added to the programme as a 2nd agenda item for 30 January, the meeting did not happen.

The sixth and final revision added the session on the Consideration of the Draft Common African Position on the Application of International Law in the Cyber Space, on 29 January. Additionally, it included the consideration of the AU Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy and the commemoration of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation for 31 January.

While the outcomes of the four sessions were adopted as Communiqué, the outcome of the session that considered the situation between Somalia and Ethiopia was adopted as a press statement. On average, it took 3 days for the published outcome documents to be released.

AU PSC CONVENED FOR EASING INTER-STATE TENSION BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA FOLLOWING A CONTROVERSIAL MOU

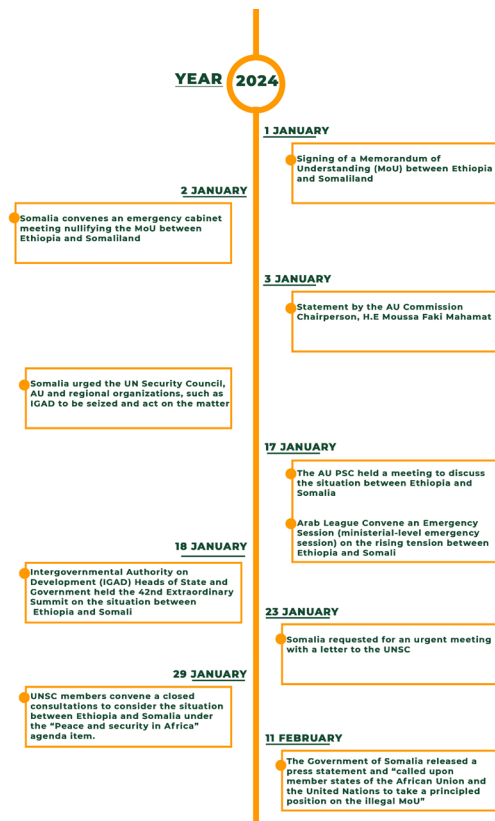
The 1192nd session of the PSC convened on 17 January, considered the situation between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia. This session comes in light of the MoU signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland on 1 January 2024 and the ensuing tension between the two countries. It also came following the letter from Somalia for the AU and the UN to address the situation. The session saw the representation of both parties, where Ambassador Abdullalie Warfa, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Somalia to the AU and H.E. Ambassador Ayele Lire, Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the AU provided a briefing to the council. It is interesting to note that the two addressed the PSC separately, thereby enabling the PSC to engage each in a contestation free atmosphere. Considering that the UN Security Council was also considering the request of Somalia, the convening of this session helped the PSC provide the basis for the engagement of the A3 when the matter is tabled for consideration in the UNSC.

The [press statement](#) issued after the session expressed deep concern over the tension between the two countries and importantly 'its potential adverse impact on peace, security and stability of the

region. Among others, this tension is also not without potential adverse consequences to the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and hence is of additional concern for the PSC considering also the fact that Ethiopia is a major troop contributing country and the potential exploitation of the situation by Al Shabaab as an instrument of recruitment.

The key contention between the two actors is a consequence of the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland. This agreement according to the Ethiopian government [aims](#) to foster cooperation and '[identify] pathway [s] to bolster political and diplomatic relations' between Somaliland and Ethiopia, particularly concerning Ethiopia's quest for access to seaports. However, the segment that Somalia found to be contrary to its territorial integrity and unleashed furious reaction from the government and the wider public was the claim by Somaliland that the MoU envisaged providing sea access for Naval Forces in exchange for, among others, formal [recognition](#) of Somaliland by Ethiopia. Ethiopian authorities declared that they have no intention of undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia and stated that the stipulation was 'for the Ethiopian government to make an in-depth assessment towards taking a position regarding the efforts of Somaliland to gain recognition.' Following the statement of the AU Commission Chairperson, which the Council welcomed, the PSC emphasized key foundational principles for the two parties to abide by including its affirmation of principles under the AU Constitutive Act and UN charters, expressing its 'commitment for the preservation of the unity, territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of all Member States, including Ethiopia and Somalia...'

Given the enormous attention and reaction that the situation attracted from various external actors from the region and beyond, the PSC in its communique urged 'external actors to abide by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the two AU member states.'



Timeline of events and diplomatic efforts in response to the tension between Somalia and Ethiopia

With the escalation of tension involving belligerent rhetoric and grandstanding involving the effort to enlist support from quarters, including those entangled in regional geopolitical tension, the PSC has requested both Ethiopia and Somalia to 'refrain from further actions and pronouncements that could negatively impact the strong bonds of good neighborliness' and to 'exercise restraint, de-escalate and engage in meaningful dialogue towards finding a peaceful resolution of the matter...'. As such, the Council has highlighted avenues for conducting meaningful dialogue by welcoming two processes, the first includes the deployment of the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo to foster dialogue between the two countries and provide regular updates to the Council. Secondly, the Council also welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to convene an Extraordinary Summit.

Key Actionable Requests:

At the 1192nd session, the PSC requested:

- To receive regular updates on the process of establishing a dialogue between Somali and Ethiopia by the H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa; and
- Both Ethiopia and Somalia to exercise restraint, de-escalate and engage in meaningful dialogue towards finding a peaceful resolution of the matter, in the spirit of African solutions to African problems.

PSC MISSED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL CRISES IN SENEGAL AS IT CONSIDERS THE CHAIRPERSON'S HALF-YEAR REPORT ON ELECTIONS IN AFRICA

The 1194th session of the PSC convened on 24 January was dedicated to the consideration of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the Commission on elections conducted in Africa from July to December 2023 and an outlook for 2024. Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for PAPS, presented the Chairperson's [report](#).²

As shown below in the map, the session reviewed the electoral process in seven Member States—Zimbabwe, Gabon, Eswatini, Liberia, Madagascar, Egypt, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which conducted presidential and/or legislative elections in the latter part of 2023. The Chairperson's report indicates the AU's deployment of election observers in all these countries except Gabon, which did not authorize the deployment of election observation missions due to a 2018 reform that excluded international observation of

² AU Member States that organized elections during the second half of 2023—namely Zimbabwe, Liberia, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Kingdom of Eswatini—delivered statements. The representatives of some of the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), including COMESA, EASF COM and ECOWAS, also addressed the session.

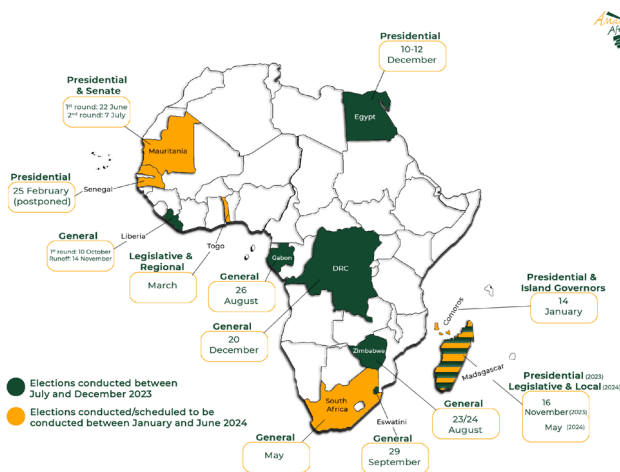
elections in the country. The outcome of the session took the form of a [communiqué](#).

As outlined in our [analysis](#) of the session, although the elections were largely conducted in a peaceful manner, disputes over outcomes were prevalent in the majority of cases, signalling a concerning pattern regarding the credibility of the electoral process across the continent. Notably, the elections in Madagascar and Comoros were marred by boycotts and low turnout. The 26 August elections in Gabon, conducted without the presence of international observers, failed to establish a legitimate government and instead, the contestation over the irregularity of the outcome was used for staging a form of household military coup. Despite this, the chairperson’s report characterizes the governance trend of the review period as ‘satisfactory’, indicating that ‘Africa is moving in the right direction’, notwithstanding the persistence of unconstitutional changes and the ‘few’ boycotts or divisions noted in some Member States.’ The communiqué underscores the imperative of sensitization and civic education to address the challenge of voter apathy. However, it overlooks the fact that this challenge stems from deeper-rooted issues within the political system, requiring comprehensive measures beyond mere awareness raising.

on Elections in Africa titled ‘Democracy at Work,’ while also urging the completion of the Documentary on its EOM. These initiatives, the annual report on elections in Africa and the documentary on AUEOMs, are important knowledge generation efforts led by the Department of Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (DPAPs).

In terms of the election outlook, the chairperson’s report provides a snapshot of elections in six Member States expected to take place during the first half of this year: Comoros, Senegal, South Africa, Mauritania, Togo, and Madagascar. During this session, the PSC urged these Member States to, among other things, take ownership of their electoral processes; create conducive conditions for more meaningful participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in national election processes; ensure peaceful and credible elections; and ensure timely and peaceful resolution of all election-related disputes.

However, events that unfolded in the Comoros and Senegal highlight the imperative for the AU to rethink its approach in relation to its engagement in elections in the continent. It is recalled that Comoros recently conducted its elections on 14 January, witnessing a concerning low voter turnout coupled with instances of post-election violence. Meanwhile, Senegal’s high-stake presidential election, initially set for February 25, faced a significant setback when President Macky Sall for the first time in the history of the country postponed it, triggering constitutional uncertainty and crises and unnecessary political unrest in the country. Both the Chairperson’s half-year report and the PSC sessions on elections in Africa should have been leveraged to identify early signs of potential electoral crises and implement timely measures to steer Member States toward credible elections, thereby preventing election-related disputes from escalating into tensions and violence. In this respect, the PSC could have addressed the crises in Senegal based on the statement that the AU Commission Chairperson and the ECOWAS Commission issued. As such, it missed an opportunity to display its willingness to exercise its responsibilities in such situations, more so on account of the risk that such situations give rise to for the occurrence of military coups.



Elections in Africa: July 2023 and June 2024

In regard to the practice and methodology of its election observation mission (AUEOM), one aspect that received appreciation from the PSC is the increased representation of women in those missions. According to the chairperson’s report, the AU has achieved a milestone with 60% female participation in its election observations, marking the first time in AUEOMs history. Furthermore, the PSC commended the Commission for finalizing the 2022 Annual Report

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

At the 1194th session, the PSC:

- Called upon the Commission to ensure that all support to Member States is provided timely, as well as to enhance its working relations with domestic election observer groups;
- Reiterated the call for all Member States in political transition to strictly adhere to and respect their election calendars,
- The transitional authorities to refrain from enlisting their candidature in the election process;
- Urged the Commission to ensure the inclusivity and sustained participation of all categories of Africans in AU observer missions;
- Appealed, once again, to the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) to allocate adequate financial resources to support election-related activities of the Commission; and
- Urged the Commission to finalize the Documentary on its Election Observation Missions.

UNRAVELLING AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY LANDSCAPE: PERSISTENT CHALLENGES AND EMERGING THREATS IN THE REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The 1195th session of the PSC held on 26 January reviewed and approved the Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa. This is the report for submission to the 37th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, as required by Article 7(1) (q) of the PSC Protocol.

The report has two main parts: the first part is on the activities of the PSC and the second part covers the state of peace and security in Africa. Other parts of the report cover the AU mediation and dialogue initiatives and matters related to democracy, election and governance as well as other thematic topics.

One of the issues the first part of the report focuses on concerns the forthcoming end of the two-year term limit for the ten members of the Council and the election of the new ten members slated for the 44th ordinary session of the Executive Council to be endorsed by the 37th ordinary session of the Assembly. A noteworthy point from Amani's [analysis](#) of the election's proceedings and outcome is that this marks the first occasion in recent times where elections for the PSC from all regions were on a clean slate.

The report also highlights the use of open meetings and the introduction of informal consultations in line with Article 8 (10) and (11) of the PSC protocol, to manage conflict situations and discuss thematic issues. The format of the informal consultations as used in 2023 does not cover the full scope of Article 8 (11) which stipulates that the PSC 'may hold informal consultations with parties concerned by or interested in a conflict or a situation under its consideration, as well as with Regional Mechanisms, international organizations and civil society organizations as may be needed for the discharge of its responsibilities'. Instead, these meetings were convened following the conclusions of the 14th Retreat of the PSC on its working methods. During the retreat, a decision was made to use informal consultations for engaging with representatives of countries suspended from participating in the AU due to unconstitutional changes of government.

Furthermore, the report highlights that only six of the eleven planned field missions were conducted by PSC members, indicating a need for enhanced commitment to mission execution. By effectively carrying out field missions in combination with holding informal discussions and dedicating sessions to specific countries, the PSC can adopt a more holistic strategy. This would allow for a more nuanced assessment of conflict situations, accurately tailored to each context.

The second section of the report offers an analysis of the various peace and security conditions that were either ongoing or newly emerged across the continent in 2023. This analysis provided some details on the interplay between different factors contributing to these situations.

Another key concern that has been emphasized in the report is the escalating spread of terrorism and

violent extremism. This trend has shown an alarming upsurge in 2023, posing a significant threat to peace and stability in the region. The report also pointed out the rise in unconstitutional changes in government. In addition to the countries that are going through political transition Niger and Gabon have also experienced coups in 2023 leading the countries to instability and conflict, undermining the democratic processes and institutions. This section of the report also focuses on the complicated political transitions taking place in several countries.

The report also highlights the negative effects of climate change on peace and security. It points out how climate change-induced disasters like droughts and floods are exacerbating resource-based conflicts and displacing populations, further straining the already fragile peace and security situation. The influence of disinformation on governance and peace is another concern raised in the report. The spread of false information often fuels conflict, undermines public trust in institutions, and disrupts peaceful democratic processes.

THE PSC ADOPTED THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON THE APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW TO THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN CYBERSPACE

The 1196th session of the PSC held on 29 January considered the draft Common African Position on the application of international law to the use of information and technologies in cyber space. This session was held as a follow-up to the PSC's 1171st session that decided on the establishment of an expert-level working group and requested the working group to submit the Draft Common African Position on Cyber Security in Africa to the PSC by December 2023, for its consideration before the Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly that was held on 17 and 18 February 2024.

Relevant previous PSC decisions

1171st session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1196 \(2024\)](#)]:

- The PSC decided to establish an expert-level working group, with the participation of the PSC Committee of Experts and other interested AU Member States, with a mandate to review the Draft African Statement adopted and endorsed by the AUCIL, for adoption by the PSC as a Common African Position on the Application of International Law in the Cyber Space; and
- The PSC requested the Working Group, once established, to submit the Draft Common African Position on Cyber Security in Africa to the PSC by December 2023, for its consideration before the next Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly to be held in February 2024.

During the session, Kwasi Asante, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Head of Mission of the Republic of Ghana and Chairperson of the PSC Committee of Experts for the month of January 2024 presented the report. Asante was also the chairperson of the expert-level working group that was established to review the draft Statement.

In the [communiqué](#) adopted by the session, the PSC recognized the growing importance of addressing cyber threats as a security concern, by explicitly mentioning cyber threats in the context of armed conflicts as a threat to national, regional and international peace and security. This may be interpreted as the PSC highlighting the need to consider cybersecurity in conflict situations. The Council also condemned malicious cyber operations and cyber-attacks, particularly the recent large-scale attack on the Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure of the AU Commission.

Furthermore, in recognizing the importance of international law, similar to the previous sessions, the Council once again reiterated that international law applies to cyberspace. The PSC also emphasized the role of member states by highlighting the international obligations pertaining to the cyber domain and emphasized that member states are required to uphold the fundamental rules of international law in cyberspace.

The most significant outcome of the session was the adoption of the Common African Position on the Application of International Law to the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Cyberspace. This development is also noteworthy as the PSC has decided to refer it to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, which was scheduled to take place on 17-18 February 2024, for consideration and endorsement. It is important to note that this is a departure from previous procedures, as the PSC has traditionally referred policy and strategic documents to the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security. This may be due to the fact that negotiations on the United Nations Cyber Treaty are set to be concluded in 2024 and the negotiations have already started. As a result, the CAP was adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government during the 47th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, making it the only statement to receive such high-level endorsement without going through the usual process of going through the Policy Organs.

Besides adopting the CAP, the PSC has encouraged member states to consider issuing national position statements on the application of international law in cyberspace, in line with the CAP. This is in line with the request for the submission of national positions regarding the application of international law to ICTs by the open-ended working group dedicated to the security aspects of information and communications technologies that was established by the UN General Assembly in 2020 through resolution 75/240.

Furthermore, the PSC also delved into the implementation and enforcement aspects, as well as the evolving nature of cyber threats and the need for ongoing adaptation of legal frameworks to effectively address them by signing, ratifying and domesticating the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention).

With regards to the CAP that was presented to the Council, there was an unanimous agreement to adopt the Common African Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace, a document consisting of 69 paragraphs. However, the final CAP document illustrates a reservation expressed by the Kingdom of Morocco over the use of the term “jus cogens” in paragraph 38.

During the working group meetings that took place in December 2023 and January 2024, issues were addressed with regards to the text of the draft CAP. Among these was a proposal to amend the phrasing of paragraph 40, particularly in relation to the term “critical infrastructures”. Morocco’s reservation was also first voiced during the experts’ working group meeting where Morocco displayed opposition to the reference to jus cogens in paragraph 38. Consequently, Morocco articulated a caveat in a footnote in the final document, stating, “In the framework of the progressive development of international law, the prohibition of the use of force could eventually be qualified as a peremptory norm by the competent organs of the United Nations to whom the mandate of codification and progressive development of international law is entrusted.”

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

At the 1196th Session, the PSC:

- Decided to refer it to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union scheduled to take place on 17-18 February 2024 for consideration and endorsement;
- Requested the AU Commission and the Special Rapporteur to circulate and promote the Common African Position on the Application of International Law to the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Cyberspace, including at multilateral forums on cyberspace, especially at the UN; and
- Requested the AU Commission and the Special Rapporteur to continue to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States on the application of international law in cyberspace.

MNJTF’S MANDATE RENEWED FOR ONE YEAR

The 1197th session of the PSC convened on 30 January 2024 was dedicated to the consideration of the AU Commission Chairperson’s report on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram and the renewal of its mandate. The PSC was briefed by the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Mamman Nuhu as well as General Ibrahim Sallau Ali, Force Commander of MNJTF.



The 1197th Session of the PSC
Source: @AUC_PAPS

Further to endorsing the AU Commission Chairperson's report and renewing MNJTF's mandate, the [communiqué](#) adopted as an outcome of the session brings attention to some of the key advancements made in degrading Boko Haram through the operations of MNJTF as well as ongoing security threats faced in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB).

One key point highlighted by the PSC with respect to surrendering Boko Haram fighters was the need for community-based approaches that would enable their smooth re-integration. This is critical for the sustainability of the gains made.

Demonstrating exemplary practice, the MNJTF also continues its engagement in non-military aspects of its mandates including facilitating humanitarian assistance to the population affected by Boko Haram insurgencies. It is in this context that the PSC welcomed MNJTF's contributions towards the realisation and implementation of the various pillars of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation (RSS) for Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram affected areas in LCB Region.

With respect to persisting concerns associated with Boko Haram's insurgency, the PSC highlighted the continued use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in MNJTF operational areas as well as the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons. In light of the nature of threats the region faces, the PSC emphasised the importance of enhanced coordination and collaboration among the MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) including through intelligence and information sharing.

One critical development in the region which may

have an implication on MNJTF's continued operational success and the extent of collaboration among the TCCs is the impact of the fallout from the coup in Niger including its sanctioning by ECOWAS for the effective collaboration with Niger and in diverting attention away from fighting Boko Haram and other terrorist entities to the removal of coup makers.

While it has not withdrawn from the MNJTF, Niger's priorities and its relationship with the countries in the region, including the TCCs, are likely to have an impact on the force's operations. It is noteworthy that the PSC failed to make any reference to this development despite its clear impact on MNJTF's operations.

Most significant is the PSC's attention to the importance of MNJTF's collaborations with local communities for addressing legitimate grievances and for inclusive peace building, which is another major highlight of the 1197th session. Implementing this partly requires enhancing MNJTF's engagement in non-military capacity. Although there has been no follow-up during the session under review, one of the decisions of the previous PSC meeting on MNJTF is of relevance in this respect.

Relevant previous PSC decision:

1126th session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1126.2 \(2022\)](#)]: the PSC called for 'restructuring of the MNJTF into a multidisciplinary force with robust police and civilian components that takes into consideration a comprehensive approach to addressing terrorism'.

In terms of funding, the PSC underscored the continued financing that MNJTF will receive from the EU whereas AU's additional support to the force will be guided in line with the MoU and Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) between AU, LCBC and TCCs of MNJTF.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

At the 1197th session, the PSC:

- Decided to renew MNJTF's mandate for one year period, effective from 1 February 2024;
- Requested the AU Commission and the LCBC to renew the MoU and SIA between AU, LCBC and MNJTF TCCs; and
- Requested the AU Commission to work to-

gether with LCBC Secretariat to regularly report to the PSC on the activities of the MNJTF.

PSC ADOPTED THE REVISED AU PCRD POLICY FOR SUBMISSION TO THE FEBRUARY 2024 AU SUMMIT WITHOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF ITS NOMENCLATURE

The 1198th session of the PSC held on 31 January considered the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy as one of the two agenda items. Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for PAPS, delivered a presentation, while Mohamed Gad, Permanent Representative of Egypt, made statement on behalf of the champion of PCRD, President Abdelfattah El-Sisi. The outcome of the session has been adopted as a [communiqué](#).

The key outcome of this session is the adoption of the [revised AU PCRD Policy](#), now featuring nine pillars. In line with its 1188th session, PSC agreed to submit it to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, scheduled to take place on 17-18 February 2024, for consideration. The earlier version of the draft revised Policy expanded from six to eight pillars, encompassing youth inclusion and environmental sustainability. However, during the ministerial and high-level open session on the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of children in situations of conflict in Africa, convened from 4 to 5 December, 2023 in Banjul, Gambia, the AUC was urged to 'ensure the participation of children in post-conflict reconstruction and development through mainstreaming of child protection in the revised AU draft policy on PCRD'. Accordingly, the final version adopted by the PSC during this session incorporates 'child protection' as an additional pillar. Furthermore, the PSC emphasized the importance of all stakeholders integrating these new pillars into their strategic planning and operational frameworks to promote a unified and synchronized approach to PCRD and overall peacebuilding efforts.

The other notable shift introduced by the revised Policy is its underlying conceptual framework. It

embraces a holistic approach to PCRD, recognizing the non-linear nature of contemporary conflicts in Africa and integrating peace-making, conflict prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. (For more details on the Policy's revision process and key aspects of the change, see Amani Africa's previous 'insights' on the topic [here](#) and [here](#)). Despite Egypt's proposal during the Cairo workshop in May/June 2023 to rename the PCRD Policy and related AU Commission organs and mechanisms, replacing 'post-conflict' with 'peacebuilding' to address the stigma associated with labelling countries as 'conflict or post-conflict situations', the final version adopted by the PSC retains its original naming of 'post-conflict reconstruction and development policy'.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

At the 1198th session, the PSC requested the Commission to:

- Expedite the establishment of a comprehensive PCRD and Peacebuilding architecture, including revitalizing the Interdepartmental Task Force; and
- Mobilize for requisite human, technical and financial resources internally, as well as from the UN and other partners, including the private sector, to ensure full implementation of PCRD and full operationalization of the PCRD Centre.

AFRICA DAY OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

The 1198th session on 31 January 2024 also commemorated the second 'Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation'. The inaugural session held the year prior was as per the Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government which was adopted at the Malabo Summit in 2022. Although not physically present during the session in 2024, the PSC received a recorded statement from the AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation, President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of the Republic of Angola. His speech was also supplemented by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola, Miguel Cêsar Dominges Bembe. The PSC expressed its appreciation for Angola's efforts in hosting the [3rd Edition](#) of the Biennale Luanda Pan-African Forum for the Center of Peace in November 2203, under

the theme 'Education, Culture of Peace and African Citizenship as tools for the Continent's sustainable development'. Although the key [outcomes](#) from the biennale forum received little public recognition, it is to be noted that the discussion predominately focused on intergenerational dialogue highlighting the need to ensure the participation of youth in the decision-making process; prioritization of education systems and technology for the enhancement and advancement of peace, reconciliation and conflict resolutions methods; and the integration of women in conflict resolution process. In this regard, the PSC endorsed the outcome by encouraging the implementation of the outcome of the Forum.

Beyond the leadership of Angola in fostering an environment for peace and reconciliation including through its roles in the conflict between DRC and Rwanda and in the CAR, the PSC's [Communique](#) also recognized the efforts by the African Union Commission towards ensuring the utilization of 'AU Special Envoys, High Representatives, Panel of the Wise and other mediators in promoting dialogue, reconciliation and national healing'. Differing from the previous year, this year session did not include the participation of countries who have undergone reconciliation process for lesson learning experience.

One omission from the session include the lack of reference to existing mechanisms including the African Union Transitional Justice Policy as well as the PCRCD policy as a guide for engagement. There is also a need for ensuring that activities of the PSC related to national reconciliation are also reflected upon during this African Day of peace and reconciliation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC FOR THE MONTH

Besides the PSC sessions, the Committee of Experts (CoE) convened two meetings to consider the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa. The first meeting took place on 16 and 17 January and the continuation for the consideration of the report was held on 22 January.



MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

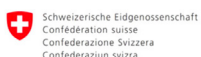
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amani Africa wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of Switzerland, the Embassy of Ireland, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Open Society Foundations for the support in the production of this Monthly Digest.



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