

MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

AMANI AFRICA

Media and Research Services

May 2024

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THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In May, under Tanzania's chairship, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) [initially planned](#) to conduct five sessions, addressing six agenda items and including a field mission to the Tigray region of Ethiopia. After several revisions of the programme of work, five sessions were held and seven agenda items were considered.

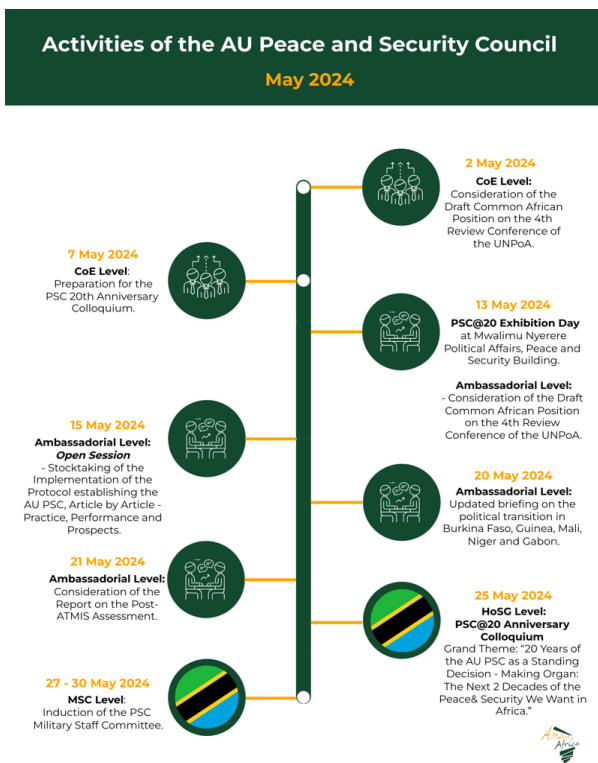
Among the five sessions, three focused on thematic issues while two considered specific conflict situations. Of the two sessions, one was dedicated to countries in transition and the other to AU's report on Assessment for Post-ATMIS security arrangements in Somalia. One of the sessions included two additional country-specific agenda items, the situation in DRC and the situation in Darfur, Sudan.

While four of the sessions were held at the ambassadorial level,¹ the remaining session that marked the 20-year anniversary of the PSC was held at the Heads of State and Government level.

Throughout the month, the PSC's Provisional Programme of Work was revised four times. The first amendment to the Provisional Programme of Work postponed the field mission to Tigray, scheduled for 17 and 18 May, along with the subsequent session scheduled for the consideration of the mission's report that was initially planned for 21 May.² The second revision rescheduled the session intended for the post-ATMIS Assessment report discussion from 13 to 21 May and moved the session for reviewing the draft Common African Position on the 4th Review Conference of the UNPoA from 21 to 13 May. The revision also included a session for 28 May to consider the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Impact of Climate Change on Peace and Security.

The third and fourth revisions both rescheduled and later postponed the session intended for discussing the report of the chairperson on climate change and Peace and Security.

The outcome documents of the sessions included the adoption of two communiqués for two sessions, two press statements and a declaration from the 20th Anniversary Colloquium of the PSC, held at the Heads of State and Government level. On average, it took 8 days for the published outcome documents to be released.



¹ Uganda assumed the role of stand-in chairperson for the session in the absence of the ambassadorial representative, in accordance with Paragraph 67 of the Council's Manual on Working Methods.

² The first revision also rescheduled the 20th anniversary Exhibition Day from 6 to 13 May and the Committee of Experts meeting for the preparation for the PSC 20th Anniversary Colloquium from 6 to 7 May. The revision also postponed the meeting of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions to June 2024.

MEMBER STATES URGED TO DEFEND AND PROMOTE THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON THE 4TH UN CONFERENCE ON PREVENTION, COMBATING AND ERADICATION OF ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

On 13 May 2024, the PSC convened its 1210th session to consider the Common African Position at the 4th United Nations Conference to Review the Progress made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. This was convened in accordance with Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.843 (XXXVI)] adopted during the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Union, held on 18 to 19 February 2023, in Addis Ababa.



14. DIRECTS the AU Commission, in line with PSC Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1105(2021)] adopted at its 1105th meeting of 15 September 2022, to initiate a process of elaborating a common African position, which will provide guidance to AU Member States during the 4th Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms; and to explore the possibility of developing a continental legally binding instrument on small arms and light weapons within the spirit of the “Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons” of 2000;



Decision of the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Union

Relevant Previous PSC decisions:

1105th session: [[PSC/PR/COMM.1105 \(2022\)](#)]: ‘The PSC directed the AU Commission to take steps, including convening a meeting of experts from Member States, to elaborate a common African position which will guide the AU Member States during the 4th Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms...’

As indicated in the [Report of PSC Field Mission to Lomé, Togo to mark the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month](#), ‘... the PSC directed the AU Commission to take steps, including convening a meeting of experts from Member States, to elaborate a common African position which will guide AU Member States during the 4th Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.’

The elaboration of the Common African Position

From 28 to 30 November 2023, experts on small arms and light weapons control from the AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs), and Intergovernmental Regional Bodies (RBs), as well as the Chair of the Peace and Security Cluster of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), convened at the AU Commission to develop a Common African Position and to get an update on steps taken so far by the AU Commission on the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs). The [Press Release](#) of the three-day meeting underscored that the Common African Position, when adopted, would serve as a reference for AU Member States when articulating issues of concern to the Continent in the fight against illicit SALWs during the forthcoming Conference on the UNPoA and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), in a coherent manner.

Ahead of the submission of the Common African Position to the PSC, its Committee of Experts (CoE) convened (on 2 May) to review the draft Common African Position.



AU Member States Experts during the development of a Common African Position at the AU Commission ahead of the fourth Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action (UNPoA).

From the Communique of the [1210th](#) meeting, the PSC adopted the [Common African Position](#) document and tasked the AU Commission to circulate it to member states, RECs/RMs, and partners. Moreover, the Council directed the AU Commission to convene regular meetings of Member States to share best practices and experiences in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons, including their illicit trade, trafficking, and circulation.



AUPSC Members during the 1210th Session. (Source: X @AUC_PAPS)

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

The PSC:

- Directed the AU Commission to circulate the Common African Position to Member States, RECs/RMs and partners; and
- Member states to ‘promote and defend the Common Position in furtherance of collective security.’

PSC URGED TO PRIORITISE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS CORE MANDATE IN THE PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS AS THE COUNCIL MARKS ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

The PSC’s 1211th session, held on 15 May, was dedicated to an open session on the ‘Stock-taking of the Implementation of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC, Article by Article—Practice, Performance and Prospects.’ This session convened within the framework of the PSC’s 20th anniversary since its operationalisation in May 2004 aimed to reflect on the PSC’s performance in implementing its Protocol over the past two decades.

Presentations were delivered by Prof. Tim Muriithi, Head of Peacebuilding Interventions at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) as well as representatives from Amani Africa and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The presentations focused on the Council’s performance, the extent of compliance with the Protocol, achievements, and challenges requiring urgent attention. No outcome document was adopted during this session.



The 1211th session of the PSC, Source: X: @africa_amani

Within this context, while highlighting key advancements made by the PSC in implementing its conflict management and resolution mandate, the presentations as well as interventions by participants highlighted several critical gaps in the implementation of the Protocol. These include:

- Limitation in early warning and early response;
- The limited implementation of PSC's decisions and its repeated calls for the deployment of various conflict management tools and mechanisms within the framework of Art.6(c) of the Protocol;
- The inability or failure to deploy major peace support operations during the past decade;
- Lack of financial resources for the implementation of the PSC decisions and other pillars of the APSA, particularly PSOs;
- Limitation to the full operationalisation of the ASF; and
- Inconsistent application of Article 7(g) of the PSC Protocol.

In addition, despite important advances in the PSC's engagement with other bodies as stipulated under Articles 16 to 20 of the PSC Protocol, it was argued that crucial parts of these provisions are yet to be fully realised, notably in relation to the engagement with the RECs/RMs. Participants particularly highlighted the need for addressing the lack of clarity or misinterpretation of the

principle of subsidiarity. Representatives from the RECs/RMs jointly expressed the need for their greater inclusion in the PSC closed sessions addressing conflict situations, to enable enhanced coordination and actions.



"...the most critical question to ask is whether the PSC has the institutional capacity, the necessary resources, and the time investment required for the implementation of all parts of the PSC Protocol or whether its institutional capacity and resources are such that there is need for prioritisation of aspects of the Protocol which deal with the core mandates of the Council."

Tsion Hagos,
Amani Africa Programme Director

Amani Africa submitted that more focus and investment be directed towards realizing the full implementation of those provisions of the PSC Protocol relating to its core mandate in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts and crises, while remaining committed to the progressive full implementation of the entire provisions of the Protocol. ISS also drew attention to the importance of clarifying the principle of subsidiarity, and enhancing engagement with the CSOs.

A common point that was emphasised in the interventions of presenters and AU member states was the importance of enhancing PSC's engagement in the implementation of its preventive mandate. Other key challenges member states raised during the session include the funding and the perennial challenge of mobilization of resources from within the continent and the operationalization of the AU Peace Fund whose utilization is hampered by lack of consensus on the means of its replenishment. They did also

emphasize the need for increased collaboration with other international institutions in alignment with Article 17 of the Protocol. Apart from the proposal from member states from North Africa who proposed changes to the PSC protocol for reforming the composition of the PSC, member states expressed that the Protocol is adequate and what is needed is ensuring its implementation rather than amending it.

Other member states on the other hand stressed that the Protocol is generally satisfactory, particularly Articles 1 to 6 regarding the PSC's foundational article that highlights the objectives, principles, and composition of the PSC with the exception of notable member states from the north region who argued that the PSC Protocol requires to be revised in order to enable a reform of the PSC with more equitable membership. Aside from this, the PSC members highlighted that the Protocol does not need extensive review except for specific provisions requiring further enhancement.

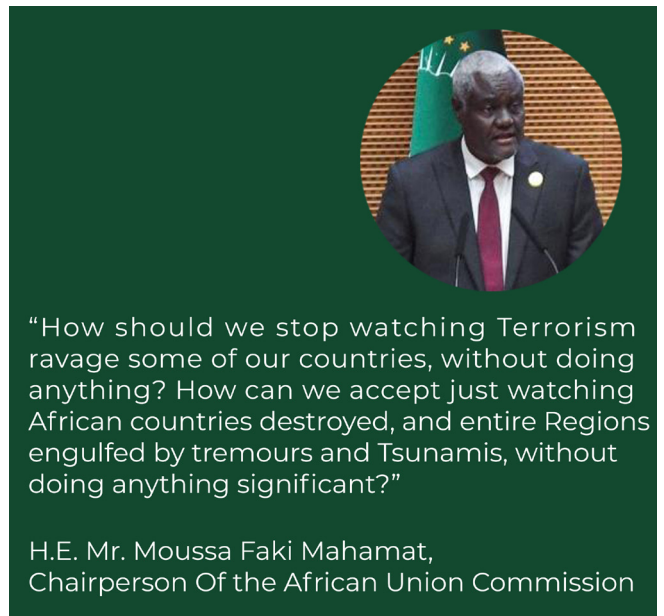
PSC SESSION ON COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION HIGHLIGHTS THE PLETHORA OF ISSUES AFFECTING AU'S ROLE IN THE TRANSITIONS

On 20 May, the PSC convened its 1212th session which was committed to an updated briefing on political transitions in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, and Niger – countries suspended from activities of the AU in relation to unconstitutional change of governments (UCG).³

³ Rebecca Amuge Otengo, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the AU delivered opening remarks standing in for May's PSC Chairperson, Innocent Shiyo, Permanent Representative of Tanzania to the AU. As regular, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye also delivered a statement. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were represented during the session as the two, concerned regional economic communities (RECs).

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

The deliberations and outcome of the session centred around several issues identified as concerns with respect to countries in transition in general and those specific to the transition of individual countries. With regard particularly to countries in the Sahel, the first area of concern relates to what the PSC called 'the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel region due to the activities of terrorists and insurgent groups, and the attendant dire humanitarian situation.' Notwithstanding that the persistence of conflicts involving terrorist groups is at the core of the security and institutional crises facing Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, the PSC, once again, failed to consider concrete steps for helping to address the situation. Highlighting the unattainability of this failure of African states to address the conditions in the Sahel, the AU Commission Chairperson in his address to the AU Assembly on 17 February 2024 posed the following rhetorical questions:



Considering this grave state of the situation, PSC's response, not exceeding expression of concern, once again shows the persistence of the holding of meetings that are nothing more than performative and the resultant lack of action that the peace and

security conditions warrant and hence its irrelevance to situations such as the Sahel. It is remarkable that in making a generalised call towards supporting affected countries, the PSC directed the target of the support to the consequences rather than the terrorist insurgency threatening the countries. It thus called upon 'the Commission, the international community and the Member States in a position to do so, to support the efforts of the Governments in the countries in transition **through the provision of humanitarian assistance.**' (emphasis added) The PSC emphasised the need for holistic solutions toward addressing structural root causes and drivers of terrorism in the region. Yet, it did not articulate what these would entail nor proposed how the AU can support the deployment of such 'holistic solutions.'

Second is the possibility of those involved in the perpetration of unconstitutional change of government becoming candidates for election. The election in Chad is feared to set a precedent for the countries under transition, thereby unravelling AU's anti-coup norm.

This notwithstanding, the PSC reiterated its 'position regarding the ineligibility of the members of the Transitional Authorities in the election process to mark the end of the Transitions, in line with the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).'

The third area of concern highlighted in the session was what the PSC called 'the shrinking political and civic spaces within some countries in political transition, especially the ban on the activities of political parties, associations, civil society organisations and repression of media activities.' In this respect, the PSC encouraged the authorities in Burkina Faso 'to create favourable conditions for political and democratic discourses towards promoting inclusivity', called on Guinean authorities 'to pursue inclusive

dialogue with the participation of all political, socio-economic and civil society stakeholders,' and Malian authorities to reconsider the decision (suspending 'political parties and activities of political associations').

There is also the threat of a breakdown of the regional order in West Africa with the three central Sahelian states deciding to withdraw from ECOWAS. PSC's engagement on this issue leaves a lot to be desired. In addition to expressing concern and encouraging the three countries to reconsider their decision, the PSC called for 'the resumption of dialogue and mediation between ECOWAS and Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.' Such generic calls without assigning a mechanism for undertaking such dialogue and mediation seem to suggest a lack of adequate appreciation of the gravity of the risk of breakdown of the regional order that this situation poses.

The other area of concern involved the issue of AU's effective role in facilitating conditions for the implementation of transitional measures for successful transition and restoration of constitutional order.

As the outcome of the session revealed, AU neither deployed effective mechanisms nor ensured the effective functioning of existing ones. It is on account of these deficiencies that the PSC reiterated its request for the AU Commission 'to appoint a High-Level Facilitator at the level of sitting or former Head of State to engage with the Transitional Authorities.' Additionally, taking note of 'the leadership vacuum within the African Union Mission for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL),' the PSC requested 'the Chairperson of the AU Commission to ensure the nomination of a High Representative, which remains a crucial interface in ensuring collective oversight between the Commission, Council, and the Countries in transition.'

It is to be recalled that 2024 marked the year during which Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea

were expected to conduct elections to end their transition periods. However, the interim authorities in all three countries have indefinitely delayed elections, indicating that election is not a priority at the moment. The PSC on the authorities in countries in transition in general 'to ensure the strict implementation of their respective transition roadmaps, within the agreed timelines.' With respect to Niger, the PSC tasked the AU Commission to '[e]xpeditiously take requisite steps in ensuring the deployment of a high-level mediation mission to Niger, to engage with the Transitional Authorities, with a view to establishing a transition roadmap in line with national and regional dispositions.' On Mali, the PSC requested the Commission 'to urgently organise a fact-finding mission to Mali to discuss the conclusions of the inter-Malian dialogue, and work with the transitional authorities to identify opportunities for collaboration and implementation.'

With respect to the transition process in Gabon, noting that 'the setting of the duration of the transition for a period of 24 months and the intention to hold elections in August 2025', the PSC expressed its rejection of 'any further extension of the transition period' and renewed its 'call for a speedy return to constitutional order within the prescribed timeframe.'

Relevant previous PSC decision:

- 1180th Session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1180.1 \(2023\)](#)]: the PSC requested the AU Commission to take the necessary steps for the deployment of a high-level mission to determine the needs of Gabon's transitional government for the return to constitutional order. The PSC also called on Gabon's transition authorities to fast-track the development of a timetable for the implementation of the Transitional Charter.
- 1180th Session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1180.2 \(2023\)](#)]: the PSC requested the AU Commission to expeditiously appoint a High-Level Representative and deploy a High-Level Mission to Niger, to determine the needs of the Transitional Government. Niger's transitional authorities were also urged by the PSC to adopt a practical and time-bound timetable for the implementation of the transitional period. Finally, the PSC decided to undertake a field mission to Niger. All three of these key decisions are yet to be realised.

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up

The PSC requested the AU Commission:

- i. In consultation with the concerned countries and working closely with existing Partners, mobilise requisite political, technical, financial, and humanitarian and stabilisation support aimed at accompanying the referred countries in political transition towards the restoration of stability, democratic governance and constitutional order;
- ii. Facilitate sharing of information and cooperation within the framework of the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, as well as the Accra Initiative, to enhance collective security in the Sahel region;
- iii. Use the Good Offices to facilitate dialogue between the countries in political transition and ECCAS and ECOWAS, respectively; and in this regard, facilitate a joint deployment of the AU Panel of the Wise with its counterparts within ECCAS and ECOWAS, respectively, to engage with all the countries in political transition; and
- iv. Provide quarterly briefing reports to the Council.

THE PSC CONDEMNED THE ATTEMPTED COUP D'ÉTAT IN THE DRC

On 20 May, the PSC received a briefing on a coup d'état attempt in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under 'Any Other Business' segment during the 1212th session that considered the political transitions in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, and Niger. It was included in the agenda of the session upon the request of member states following the attempted coup that took place on 18 and 19 May. During the consideration of the agenda item, the PSC received a briefing from the DRC representative detailing the events of the attempted coup.

According to Sylvain Ekenge, the spokesperson for the DRC army, the attempted coup, allegedly led by Christian Malanga, a Congolese based in the US, involved two attacks - one at the presidential palace in Kinshasa and the other at the residence of Vital Kamerhe, a parliamentary candidate for the speaker's position. Malanga, the individual behind the coup, was among six individuals killed in the clashes. Additionally, it was reported that approximately 51 individuals, including three American citizens, have been [detained](#).

In a [press statement](#) released after the session, similar to previous attempted coups the PSC reaffirmed AU's policy of zero-tolerance to unconstitutional changes of government and condemned the 'attempted coup d'état against the democratically elected government of President Felix Tshisekedi'. The PSC noted that this coup 'threatened to reverse the democratic gains achieved in the country and further destabilise the region'. The attempted coup in the DRC marks the eleventh in a series of attempts and plots that have occurred in DRC itself, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and Sierra Leone since 2020.

Notably, four of these countries are currently under military rule.

With regards to the response of the government to the attempt, the PSC commended 'the defence and security forces of the DRC for their swift response and for bringing to book the perpetrators of the attempted coup d'état, and for the restoration of calm and normalcy in the country.' Additionally, the PSC 'reaffirmed the AU support to the legitimate authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo.' Despite the government's responsibility to protect the country, which the government swiftly undertook as stated by the PSC, the attempted coup should not open doors for drastic measures that could lead to the violation of human rights of individuals in the name of consolidating power.

In addition to the AU, the South African Development Community (SADC) has also condemned the act of violence and appreciated 'the DRC army for having arrested the perpetrators and ceased any escalation' in a [press release](#) published on 20 May.

DELAYED REPORT RESULTS IN AN INFORMAL SESSION ON ATMIS

On 21 May, the PSC convened a session to review the Report on the post-ATMIS assessment. The session included a briefing by Mohammed El-Amine Souef, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia and Head of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia, and the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate, AU Commission Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) department, Sarjoh Bah. In his briefing, Bah provided the Council with an update on the comprehensive assessment of the situation on the ground and the preparation of the report for submission to the PSC. During a previous [session](#), the Council was briefed by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) on the proposal for Post

ATMIS Security Arrangements, in alignment with UNSC Resolution [2710](#).

Relevant previous PSC decision:

- 1205th PSC session [PSC/PR/COMM.1205 \(2024\)](#): PSC requested the AU Commission to undertake a comprehensive and detailed planning based on the situation on the ground

While the report was ready, the resistance from Somalia and its objection to the technical analysis of the situation on the ground led to the non-consideration of the report by the PSC. Consequently, the report was not finalised before the rescheduled PSC meeting on 21 May, and thus the session was turned into an informal consultation with the AU PAPS Conflict Management Directorate regarding the mission and report without the presence of the FGS as initially envisaged.

This incident raises two critical working methods questions. The first concerns the extent of consultations and coordination between the AU Commission, ATMIS, and the FGS during the conduct of the strategic assessment and the preparation of the report. The second issue pertains to whether and under what conditions the PSC declines to consider a technically sound and factually founded report simply because some aspects of the report are found to be politically unpalatable for a concerned member state. While the PSC can insist on adequate consultation and coordination when undertaking assessment, it would be unwise to allow the tampering of technical reports to accommodate the political sensitivity of governments.

PSC POSTPONED ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE AU COMMISSION ASSESSMENT REPORT ON POST-ATMIS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOLLOWING SOMALIA'S OBJECTION TO ELEMENTS OF THE REPORT

In light of the escalation of armed conflict between the Rapid Support Force (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) particularly the imminent threat of violent capture of El Fasher, the Capital of North Darfur, the PSC during the adoption of its agenda added the situation in Darfur to the agenda of its 21 May session, among others, on the request of Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner PAPS. As an item not initially planned, the session did not engage any briefers and/or speakers on the matter but drew on updates provided by the PAPS department.

The escalating conflict between the RSF and SAF near El Fasher, North Darfur erupted a month prior to the session when on 14 April, the RSF captured the city of Mellit in North Darfur. This city is of strategic importance as it connects Sudan to Libya. The seizure of territory by the RSF intensified the clashes between RSF-allied forces and SAF-allied forces. On 10 May, there were reports of active clashes between the RSF and SAF in El Fasher. This situation raises alarm due to past atrocities committed by the RSF in the region coupled with the recent reports of the targeting of 13 villages and non-Arab civilians by the RSF upon the capture of cities in Northern Darfur. As such, during the [session](#), the Council expressed its concerns over the urgent threat that the growing conflict poses to civilians, highlighting the rising risk of severe atrocities. It also urged the parties involved to immediately evacuate civilian buildings and institutions, as well as government establishments.

The discussion on this agenda item resulted in three key [outcomes](#) worth noting. Two of the decisions focused on the protection of civilians in the region. The Council requested for the AU High-Level Panel to directly engage with the recently appointed Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, Adam Dieng to develop proposals on how to address ongoing atrocities and to prevent further escalation in Darfur, as well as to develop a plan for the protection of civilians. The PSC also requested the 'African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to urgently investigate the human rights situation in El Fasher and other areas in Darfur and to report back to the Council.'

In line with the Council's previous decision, the PSC also restated its plan to conduct a field mission to Port Sudan.

Relevant previous PSC decision:

- 1149th PSC session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1149 \(2023\)](#)]: decides that the Council to undertake a Field Mission to Sudan

Key actionable decisions requiring follow-up:

- Council requested the AU High-Level Panel to work with the newly-appointed AU Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, to develop proposals on how to address ongoing atrocities and to prevent further escalation in Darfur, as well as to develop a plan for the protection of civilians;
- Council requested the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to urgently investigate the human rights situation in El Fasher and other areas in Darfur and to report back to the Council, including recommendations to hold perpetrators accountable; and

- Reiterated its decision to undertake a field mission to Port Sudan to obtain first-hand information regarding the situation on the ground, and to express solidarity with the suffering people of Sudan – in alignment with the previous decision during PSC 1208th session.

PSC MARKED ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY AS AFRICA FACES GROWING CONFLICTS AND CRISES

On 25 May, on Africa Day, the PSC convened a High-Level Colloquium in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, as part of a series of events envisaged throughout May to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the PSC.⁴ A head of the Colloquium, on 24 May, the PSC also hosted a Public Lecture on the theme: 'The Peace and Security we Want', at the University of Dar es Salaam. The Colloquium, held under the theme '20 Years of the AU PSC as a Standing Decision-Making Organ: The Next Two Decades of the Peace and Security We Want in Africa', provided another opportunity for the PSC to reflect on its 20 years journey and consider the path forward.



The High-Level Colloquium, Source: @AUC_PAPS

⁴ Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan delivered a keynote speech as the Chair of the PSC for May 2024, while Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission delivered a reflection statement. Former leaders and AU officials were also in attendance at the event, including Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo, Burundi's former President, Domitien Ndayizeye, Tanzania's former President, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, and Ambassador Said Djinnit, first Commissioner for Peace and Security of the AU.

The [Declaration](#) adopted as an outcome of the Colloquium highlighted a wide range of issues, including the progress made over the last two decades, ongoing peace, security, and governance challenges that the continent continues to face, and the way forward.

In terms of achievements, participants noted:



“Twenty years ago, in establishing the PSC we placed in it our determination to have an effective operational structure to address conflicts and to enhance our capacity to bring about peace, security and stability across Africa. We did so because we recognised that conflict and violence pose the biggest threats to the development of our communities. Since its establishment, the PSC has made notable achievements, from establishing mediation processes to guiding post-conflict reconstruction and development.”

President of Tanzania,
Samia Suluhu Hassan

On the other hand, the increase in conflicts and crises on the continent and their tragic consequences for civilians, the alarming resurgence of military coup d'état, the escalating menace of terrorism and violent extremism, and the growing threat of global cyber-attacks were highlighted as persisting challenges.

In light of the above challenges, the Declaration outlines various measures that should be taken as the PSC repositions itself for the coming decades. In this respect, one of the issues emphasised in the Declaration is the imperative of enhancing or fully operationalising some of its instruments within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

The emphasis on the need to enhance PSC's

conflict prevention mandate is particularly important, given that this mandate has been one of the key aspects of the PSC Protocol where implementation has fallen short. Indeed, this is one of the areas identified in Amani Africa's [special research report](#) as requiring further attention. According to the report, despite the PSC Protocol's emphasis on conflict prevention, the PSC has predominantly functioned like a 'fire brigade,' primarily responding to conflicts after they erupt. This tendency, the report argues, has resulted in the proactive dimension of its mandate, especially conflict prevention, being largely ignored.

The Declaration outlines three specific measures to enhance the PSC's conflict prevention mandate. The first measure is facilitating swift early responses to early warning signs of looming conflicts and crises through the full utilisation of preventive diplomacy tools, including the Panel of the Wise, FEMWISE, PANWISE, and YouthWise. Secondly, the Declaration underscores the need for the Commission to elaborate a clear and objective criterion for a trigger mechanism—a request first made during the Cairo Retreat held in October 2018 and further reiterated in various PSC Communiqués—to facilitate the role of the PSC in assessing the need for early action while ensuring its consistent application in all circumstances. The third is an appeal to 'Member States to address the issue of denialism whenever early warning signs are provided to prevent full-blown conflicts.' However, the Declaration is silent about the recent institutional setback suffered by the Continental Early Warning System following the dismantling of a dedicated structure in the PAPS and its implications for PSC's conflict prevention mandate.

Regarding the rise of conflicts in the continent, the Declaration interestingly pays attention to the importance of addressing the underlying causes and drivers of conflicts such as governance deficit, reminding

Member States to 'respond more positively to the legitimate grievances of the population.' In the same vein, concerning terrorism and violent extremism, the Declaration underscores the need for countries affected by terrorism to 'mainstream political solutions to their ongoing security and military measures,' an approach that echoes the policy approach advanced by Amani Africa in its [special research report](#) titled 'The growing threat of terrorism in Africa: A product of misdiagnosis and faulty policy response?'

On the resurgence of military coups, the PSC expresses its commitment to implement all AU normative frameworks on illegal take-overs of government. It also agrees to redouble efforts to address governance deficits, promote good governance and democracy, and uphold constitutionalism. However, it is a missed opportunity for the PSC to acknowledge the enormous challenges facing its anti-coup norm and the pressing need for rethinking its approach, which has experienced setbacks in recent years not only in deterring military coups but also in ensuring the timely return of affected countries to constitutional order.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC DURING THE MONTH

One of the commemorative activities within the framework of the 20th anniversary of the PSC was the Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security Exhibition Day. Apart from the AU's efforts, including that of the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development, that were showcased, various international humanitarian agencies presented their ongoing work in Africa, and organisations like the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Food Programme African Union Global Office displayed their humanitarian diplomacy activities in Africa.



Exhibition Day on Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security Source: X: [AUC PAPS](#)

Furthermore, the Committee of Experts convened for two separate meetings on 2 and 7 May. The initial meeting, held on 2 May, was dedicated to reviewing the Draft Common African Position at the 4th Review Conference of the UNPoA. The subsequent meeting was primarily centred on preparations for the PSC's 20th Anniversary Colloquium.

From 27 to 30 May, the PSC Military Staff Committee (MSC) conducted an induction session in Dar es Salaam. The purpose of the induction was to familiarise new MSC members with the PSC's working methods. The session also addressed key operational challenges, such as the African Stand-by Force's operationalisation, as well as various country and thematic security challenges, including unconstitutional changes of government.



MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

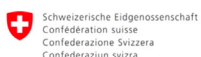
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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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