

SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

REVITALISING AFRICAN UNION'S ROLE IN PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FROM AU'S AD HOC MECHANISMS FOR PEACE

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AU Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on Libya and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping meeting Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, the African continent has witnessed a rise in both the number and geographic spread of conflicts. Alarming, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)—established under the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to provide the African Union (AU) with normative instruments and institutional mechanisms for promoting and maintaining peace, security, and stability—has increasingly struggled to respond effectively to the continent's growing security challenges.¹ Recent conflicts in Libya, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo–Rwanda, and tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia underscore the AU's waning agency in addressing these crises, with external actors often stepping in. The erosion of multilateralism, intensifying geopolitical rivalries, and increasing foreign involvement in African peace and security affairs demand that the AU urgently recalibrate and strengthen its peace and security framework.

In this context, there has been growing calls for reform of the APSA. At the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in February 2025, Kenya's President William

Ruto, serving as the AU Champion for Institutional Reform, submitted a proposal outlining eight key measures to accelerate AU reforms. Among them was a recommendation to review APSA, recognizing that 'the dire peace and security situation in Africa partly indicts the continent's peace architecture'. Earlier, during its 1163rd ministerial-level meeting on 21 July 2023, the PSC had also requested the AU Commission to initiate a review of APSA, recognizing the need to adapt the architecture to Africa's evolving and complex security landscape. As a result, efforts to review APSA are currently underway.

A key area where major reform is anticipated is the revitalization of the AU's preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts—restoring what was once a 'golden era' of ambitious, robust, and sustained diplomatic engagement.² Central to this revitalization is the need to re-establish diplomacy as the primary tool for achieving peace and security across the continent, building on the lessons and precedents of past AU initiatives. *Ad hoc* mechanisms, such as the creation of heads of state and government *ad hoc* committees and high-level panels, have played a pivotal role in addressing security crises.

As *ad hoc* mechanisms have become one of the key diplomatic tools at the AU's disposal—particularly over the past 15 years—, their success has been mixed. Some have achieved remarkable results

¹ See Amani Africa, *Memo to the New AU Commission Leadership from the Roaring Guns on AU's First Decade of Silencing the Guns*, Special Research Report (November 2025) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/memo-to-the-new-au-commission-leadership-from-the-roaring-guns-on-ous-first-decade-of-silencing-the-guns/>; Amani Africa, Annual Review 'Africa in a New Era of Insecurity and Instability: The 2024 Review of the Peace and Security Council' (Amani Africa 2025) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/Africa-in-a-New-Era-of-Insecurity-and-Instability-The-2024-Review-of-the-Peace-and-Security-Council.pdf>

² Amani Africa, *Special Research Report No.20* (May 2024), 'The African Union Peace and Security Council at 20: From a Promising Past and a Challenged Present to a Less Certain Future?' available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-at-20-from-a-promising-past-and-a-challenged-present-to-a-less-certain-future/>

in fulfilling their mandates, such as the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), which has become a standard-setting mechanism.³ Others, however, have struggled to make meaningful progress.

This analysis seeks to identify the factors that influence the success or failure of these mechanisms, with the aim of helping the AU sharpen its diplomatic tools for more effective engagement as the continent faces rising deadly and complex conflicts. The analysis begins with this introduction, followed by a clarification of key terminologies—namely, ad hoc committees and high-level panels. It then examines the various ad hoc mechanisms deployed by the PSC since 2008. In Part IV it presents analysis of the key insights and lessons from these mechanisms in terms of the factors and conditions that affect the outcome and impact of these mechanisms in advancing peace. Finally, it closes with a conclusion and recommendations on the APSA review, informed by the experiences of ad hoc mechanisms in peacemaking.

II. AD HOC MECHANISMS FOR PEACE

These mechanisms are often established by the PSC under the authority vested in it by its Protocol but they are also at times instituted by the AU's supreme authority, the AU Assembly.⁴

³ Abdul Mohamed, *The Last Serious African Mediation? Reflections on and Lessons from the AUHIP Experience and the Meaning of African Political Agency*, Ideas Indaba, (2 June 2026) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/thelast-serious-african-mediation-reflections-on-and-lessons-from-the-auhip-experience-and-the-meaning-of-african-political-agency/>

⁴ *The African Union Peace and Security*

Article 6(c) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC) mandates the Council to engage in '*peacemaking, including the use of good offices, mediation, conciliation, and enquiry*'.⁵ This provision empowers the PSC to address both the immediate and structural dimensions of conflict by facilitating dialogue, negotiating settlements, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts aimed at tackling root causes and preventing the recurrence of violence. To effectively implement these mandates, the Protocol further authorizes the PSC to establish subsidiary bodies as needed. In particular, Article 8(5) provides that the PSC may create such bodies, including *ad hoc* committees, as it deems necessary to undertake specific tasks such as mediation, conciliation, or fact-finding enquiries.⁶

In practice, the PSC exercises this mandate through formal communiqués and AU Assembly decisions, which authorize or request the establishment of such mechanisms—in the form of ad hoc committees or high-level panels (see list of these mechanisms in the table in the annex). The first instance in which the PSC exercised this power was in July 2008, during its 142nd session, when it requested the AU Commission to establish

Council Handbook – 2024, Amani Africa Media and Research Services, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-handbook-2024/>

⁵ African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, 2002. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37293-treaty-0024_-_protocol_relating_to_the_establishment_of_the_peace_and_security_council_of_the_african_union_e.pdf

⁶ *Ibid.*

a High-Level Panel on Darfur.⁷ Since then, a dozen *ad hoc* mechanisms have been constituted. While most of these mechanisms are initiated by the Council itself, there are also instances where the Chairperson of the AU Commission—acting under the authority vested in them by Article 10 of the PSC Protocol—initiates the mechanism, with PSC’s endorsement. The High-Level Panel on Egypt and the mediation process in Ethiopia are examples of such cases.

While the AU makes use of various tools for preventive diplomacy and peace-making, the most notable of these that draw on the standing of prominent personalities are the *ad hoc* committees and the high-level panels. The analysis of these two mechanisms offers insights into the lessons on how to improve AU’s peace-making and mediation instruments and approaches.

2.1. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committees are peace making mechanisms composed of representatives from AU Member States—often at the level of Heads of State, Foreign Ministers, or senior diplomats—tasked with collectively applying political leverage to address a specific crisis. The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC envisions these committees as comprising ‘*an individual State or group of States*’ mandated for mediation, conciliation, or inquiry. In AU practice, High-Level *Ad Hoc* Committees

⁷ While this is the first Panel to be established under the PSC protocol, the first such panel to be instituted by the AU was the AU Panel of Eminent African Personalities led by Kofi Annan that mediated the post-election conflict in Kenya. See *Back from the Brink: The 2008 Mediation process and Reforms in Kenya* (2014) <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/backFromBrink-web.pdf>

have been constituted in response to urgent political and security crises. Notable examples include the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on Libya in 2011, and the ‘C5’ Committee on South Sudan, which brought together five Member States to support the peace process. These *ad hoc* committees function as instruments of collective political will, lending the authority and diplomatic weight of several Member States to help steer negotiations, broker ceasefires, or support transitional arrangements.

2.2. High-Level Panels

High-Level Panels are experience-based peace-making mechanisms composed of eminent African personalities—typically former Heads of State, seasoned diplomats, or senior political figures—appointed to lead conflict assessments, facilitate dialogue, and propose actionable recommendations. They also operate as mediation instruments dedicated to resolution of specific conflict. Unlike *ad hoc* committees, which have intergovernmental character tapping into the influence of sitting heads of state and government, High-Level Panels operate as individual-based entities, leveraging the experience, neutrality, and diplomatic credibility of their members. A prominent example is the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), established in 2008–09 under the leadership of former South African President Thabo Mbeki. The panel, additionally involving former presidents of Nigeria and Burundi, conducted an in-depth analysis of the Darfur conflict and proposed a roadmap for peace, justice, and reconciliation. High-Level Panels are typically tasked with advisory, facilitative, mediation and analytical or investigative roles. They produce strategic reports, mediation frameworks, or policy options

and engage in mobilizing consensus of member states and helping conflict parties find common ground but do not possess direct decision-making authority.

Feature	Ad hoc Committees	High-Level Panels
Composition	Heads of State and governments	Respected former leaders or diplomats
Function	Direct political dialogue, rapid missions	Strategic mediation, investigation, recommendations
Mandate and Duration	Temporary and short-term	Often operate for prolonged or renewable periods
Operation and Origin	The Assembly or the PSC	Chairperson of AU Commission or PSC

Table 1: Comparison of AU Ad hoc Committees and High-Level Panels: composition, function, mandate, and origin within African Union peace processes.

III. MANDATES AND FUNCTIONS

The establishment of high-level panels and *ad hoc* committees by the PSC represents one of the Council's most significant mechanisms for addressing complex political crises and conflicts on the continent. These panels are *ad hoc* mechanisms composed of eminent African personalities with the expertise and credibility to engage conflict parties in dialogue, conduct in-depth assessments, and propose concrete solutions. Each panel is mandated to undertake specific tasks based on the context of the conflict, ranging from facilitating peace processes and supporting post-conflict reconstruction to mediating between disputing political actors and ensuring

accountability and reconciliation. The following section outlines the mandates and functions of key AU high-level panels, namely the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan, the High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire, the High-Level Panel on Egypt, the High-Level Panel on Sudan, the High-Level Committee on Libya and the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (C5) demonstrating the diversity of contexts in which these bodies have operated and the evolving role of the AU in conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy.

3.1. High-Level Panels

3.1.1. AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD)

The AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD) represents the first occasion on which the PSC exercised its power to establish a high-level ad hoc mechanism as part of its conflict resolution efforts. The Panel was established by the PSC on 21 July 2008, at its 142nd meeting, during which the Council reviewed the situation in Darfur in light of the application submitted by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 14 July 2008 for an arrest warrant to be issued against the President of Sudan.⁸

During that session, the Council requested the AU Commission to establish an independent High-Level Panel composed of distinguished Africans of high integrity, with the mandate to

⁸ African Union Peace and Security Council 2008, *Communiqué of the 142nd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, 21 July 2008, Addis Ababa*, available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/142-Sudan-AU-PSC-20090721.pdf>

examine the situation in Darfur in depth and to submit recommendations to the Council on ‘how best the issue of accountability and combating impunity on the one hand, and reconciliation and healing on the other, could be effectively and comprehensively addressed.’ This decision was subsequently endorsed by the 12th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in February 2009.

Subsequently, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, appointed the following members to the Panel:

- Mr. Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa (Chair)
- Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Head of State of Nigeria (Member)
- Mr. Pierre Buyoya, former President of Burundi (Member)
- Mr. Ahmed Maher El Sayed, former Foreign Minister of Egypt (Member)
- Mr. Tieblé Dramé, former Minister in the Government of Mali (appointed but unable to take up his role as a member)
- Justice Florence Ndepele Mwachande Mumba, Judge of the Supreme Court of Zambia (Member)
- Alhaji Kabir A. Mohammed, former State House Counsel, Nigeria (Member)
- Ms. Rakiya Omaar, Director, African Rights (Member)

The Panel began its work in March 2009 and completed its assignment in September 2009, submitting its comprehensive and extensive report—titled ‘*Darfur: The Quest for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation*’—in October of the same year.⁹ The report is widely regarded as a breakthrough, not only because it was the result of extensive consultations involving more than 2,700 representative individuals in Darfur and about 400 in Khartoum, but also because, in the words of the then Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, it provides ‘a clear roadmap on how best the interrelated issues of peace, justice, reconciliation, and healing could be addressed in Darfur,’ thereby contributing to the overall objective of promoting sustainable peace and stability in Sudan. Although some of its key recommendations—such as facilitating the Darfur-Darfur Conference and the Darfur Political Process—were not successfully implemented, the report remains a landmark analysis of the Sudanese crisis.¹⁰

The PSC considered the Panel’s report during its 207th session, held at summit level on 29 October 2009, and endorsed the report and its recommendations. Furthermore, the Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to establish an AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) to assist the implementation of all aspects of the AUPD recommendations, thereby

⁹ African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD) 2009, *Darfur: The Quest for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation*, African Union, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/aupdreportdarfureng.pdf>

¹⁰ Alex de Waal and Abdul Mohammed (2024), ‘Defining the Crisis in the Sudan: Lessons from the African Union High-Level Panels for Sudan and South Sudan,’ Thabo Mbeki Foundation in association with World Peace Foundation., p.15

marking the transition from AUPD to AUHIP.¹¹

3.1.2. AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan

As noted above, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) was established by the PSC during its 207th session, following consideration of the report of the AUPD.¹² In that session, the Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to establish the AUHIP, composed of former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Pierre Buyoya, and General Abdulsalami Abubakar, to assist in the implementation of all aspects of the AUPD's recommendations. Additionally, the Council mandated the Panel to support the Sudanese parties in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and other related processes in Sudan.

While the Panel's initial mandate focused on the implementation of the CPA and the AUPD report, it was subsequently expanded to include facilitation of negotiations on post-secession issues between Sudan and South Sudan.¹³

As relations deteriorated between the two countries following South Sudan's secession in July 2011, the PSC further broadened the Panel's mandate to engage both states in resolving their disputes. Key unresolved issues included economic

arrangements, border demarcation, the contested area of Abyei, and the conflict-affected 'Two Areas' of South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

When hostilities erupted in April 2012 around Heglig, the last remaining oil-producing territory under Sudanese jurisdiction after the secession of South Sudan, the AUHIP was once again mandated to lead efforts on all outstanding issues between Sudan and South Sudan. As outlined in Amani Africa's PSC Handbook, the leadership of the PSC, the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission, and AUHIP's technical and diplomatic roles were all integral in addressing the Heglig incident and preventing the two countries from descending into full-scale war.¹⁴

Exercising its conflict prevention and resolution mandate, the PSC immediately convened its 319th session at ministerial level on 24 April 2012 and adopted a roadmap to ease tensions, facilitate the resumption of negotiations on post-secession relations, and work toward the normalization of relations between Sudan and South Sudan.¹⁵ The Council urged both parties to resume negotiations and reach an agreement on outstanding issues, including oil and associated payments, citizenship, resolution of disputed areas,

¹¹ African Union Peace and Security Council 2009, Communiqué of the 207th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, 29 October, Abuja, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/207-darfureng.pdf>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For a comprehensive account of this experience see Alex de Waal and Willow Berridge, *The Sudans: Africa's Search for Peace, Democracy and Two Viable States* (2026).

¹⁴ The African Union Peace and Security Council Handbook – 2024, Amani Africa Media and Research Services, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-handbook-2024/>

¹⁵ African Union Peace and Security Council 2012, Communiqué of the 319th Ministerial Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the situation between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, 24 April, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/319-com-soudan-south-sudan-24-04-2012.pdf>

border demarcation, and the final status of Abyei.¹⁶ The negotiations were to be conducted under the auspices of AUHIP within a three-month timeframe. If no agreement was reached within that period, AUHIP was mandated to submit a comprehensive report to the Council on the status of the negotiations, including detailed proposals on all outstanding issues, which would be endorsed as final and binding solutions to the post-secession relations.¹⁷

The PSC roadmap became incorporated word by word into UN Security Council Resolution 2046. Such level of unified action by the AU and UN on the basis of AU's roadmap forced the two countries to de-escalate the tension and take measures for resuming negotiations on the outstanding post-secession issues.¹⁸

Through intensive negotiations, the Panel was able not only to pull both countries back from the brink of full-scale war, but also to broker, with IGAD and Ethiopia's active support, the signing of eight landmark Cooperation Agreements in September 2012.¹⁹ These agreements

addressed many of the unresolved issues arising from South Sudan's secession. The Panel continued its engagement by facilitating follow-up negotiations to develop detailed implementation modalities.

The Panel's efforts have been widely praised for producing a 'wide-ranging, detailed, and historic set of treaties' governing almost every key aspect of Sudan–South Sudan relations.²⁰ The work of the AUHIP stands as the AU's most ambitious, comprehensive, and sustained peace process engagement to date,²¹ and sets a precedent for future AU peacemaking efforts.

3.1.3. High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire

In the aftermath of the disputed 2010 presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, which sparked a prolonged and violent political crisis, the AU established a High-Level Ad Hoc Committee to help address the situation.²² As part of its response, the PSC, during its 259th meeting, decided to create a High-Level Panel under its authority to facilitate a resolution that safeguards both peace and democratic

¹⁶ See para. 13 of PSC's communiqué adopted at its 319th session, held on 24 April 2012, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/319-com-soudan-south-sudan-24-04-2012.pdf>

¹⁷ See para. 14 of PSC's communiqué adopted at its 319th session.

¹⁸ See Alex de Waal and Willow Berridge, *The Sudans: Africa's Search for Peace, Democracy and Two Viable States* (2026).

¹⁹ Republic of the Sudan and Republic of South Sudan 2012, *Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan*, 27 September, Addis Ababa, available at: https://ucdpged.uu.se/peaceagreements/fulltext/SD_120927_Cooperation%20Agreement%20between%20Sudan%20and%20South%20Sudan.pdf

²⁰ Alex de Waal and Abdul Mohammed (2024), 'Defining the Crisis in the Sudans', p.23; Abdul Mohamed, *The Last Serious African Mediation? Reflections on and Lessons from the AUHIP Experience and the Meaning of African Political Agency*, Ideas Indaba, (2 June 2026) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/thelast-serious-african-mediation-reflections-on-and-lessons-from-the-auhip-experience-and-the-meaning-of-african-political-agency/>

²¹ Ibid

²² Amani Africa, *Handbook on the African Union Peace and Security Council*, Amani Africa, Addis Ababa, 2021, <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Amani-Africa-Handbook-2021-English.pdf>

principles.²³

The composition of the Panel was officially announced during its inaugural meeting on 31 January, following consultations that took place during the 16th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on 30 and 31 January 2011.²⁴ It included the Heads of State of:

- Mauritania (Chair),
- Burkina Faso,
- Chad,
- South Africa, and
- Tanzania,
- Along with the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the President of the ECOWAS Commission.

According to the communiqué of the 259th PSC meeting, the Panel was directed to be supported by a team of experts and work in close collaboration with international partners, particularly the United Nations.

The Panel was mandated to assess the political situation and propose a comprehensive solution, grounded in relevant decisions of the AU and ECOWAS. In terms of time frame, the Panel was

expected to conclude its work within one month.

Before the establishment of the Panel, the first initiative of the AU involved dispatching former South African President Thabo Mbeki, appointed by AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping, to mediate between the disputing parties.²⁵

Despite meeting with key actors and UN officials, Mbeki's mission quickly lost momentum. In a subsequent move, the AU appointed Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga as mediator. However, his earlier public condemnation of incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo and advocacy for Gbagbo's removal by force cast doubt on his neutrality.²⁶ This perceived bias undermined his credibility, prompting Gbagbo to reject Odinga's role outright.

It is after recognizing the ineffectiveness of these individual envoys that the PSC adopted a more structured approach by establishing a *High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire*. The panel pursued a coordinated mediation strategy, which included deploying experts for an on-the-ground assessment, engaging in shuttle diplomacy, and developing a set of recommendations. These included endorsing Alassane Ouattara as the rightful president, proposing guarantees for Gbagbo's safe exit, and calling for the formation of an inclusive unity government to facilitate national reconciliation.

²³ African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the 259th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Situation in Côte d'Ivoire*, 28 January 2011, Amani Africa, <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/259-communique-psc-final-259th-session-on-cote-d-ivoire-en.pdf>

²⁴ African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the 259th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Situation in Côte d'Ivoire*, 28 January 2011, Amani Africa, <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/259-communique-psc-final-259th-session-on-cote-d-ivoire-en.pdf>

²⁵ Kasaija Phillip Apuuli, 'The African Union's Notion of "African Solutions to African Problems" and the Crises in Côte d'Ivoire (2010–2011) and Libya (2011)' (ACCORD) <https://www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/the-african-unions-notion-of-african-solutions-to-african-problems-and-the-crises-in-cote-divoire-2010-2011-and-libya-2011/>

²⁶ *Ibid.*

While the African Union's High-Level Panel on the Côte d'Ivoire crisis managed to bridge some of the initial divergences among African states, the Panel ultimately fell short of achieving a political breakthrough in the country. The Panel's proposals were categorically rejected by former President, which dismissed them as unoriginal and unacceptable, particularly since they affirmed election results he firmly opposed. In response to the impasse, the PSC appointed José Brito of Cape Verde as High Representative to oversee the implementation of the Panel's recommendations. However, this move quickly unraveled when President-elect Ouattara's faction rejected Brito's appointment, citing concerns over bias and the lack of inclusive consultation.

While the AU marked a shift from personality-driven mediation to a more institutional, multi-state effort led by sitting African Heads of State, signaling a stronger and more legitimate diplomatic posture, it nonetheless failed to secure buy-in from all critical stakeholders. Though it coordinated expert assessments and offered proposals aligned with the broader international consensus, the Panel lacked the necessary political leverage and enforcement mechanisms to influence entrenched actors. Key missteps included the failure to manage perceptions of neutrality and to establish trusted follow-up mechanisms. In the end, the AU's efforts, while symbolically significant, were constrained by internal divisions, limited credibility, and insufficient authority to alter the strategic calculations of the parties involved.

3.1.4. High-Level Panel on Egypt

The AU High-Level Panel on Egypt was established in response to the overthrow

of elected President Mohamed Morsi by the army, led by General Al-Sissi (the current President), on 3 July 2013. This followed months of escalating tension between Morsi's government and the opposition, as well as mass protests against President Morsi. Earlier on the same day, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, issued a statement expressing concern over the evolving situation in the country.²⁷ The chairperson further expressed her intention to dispatch to Egypt a group of eminent African personalities to consult with the Egyptian stakeholders and assist in the initiation of a responsible and constructive dialogue that would help Egyptian people to overcome the difficult situation they are facing.

On 4 July, the Chairperson issued another statement following the military's seizure of power. In the statement, the Chairperson of the Commission observed that the removal of President Morsi 'falls under the AU doctrine on unconstitutional changes of Government', and reiterated her plan to dispatch a team of eminent personalities to Egypt to interact with the ruling authorities and other Egyptian stakeholders, as they work towards a transition that should lead to an early return to constitutional order.²⁸

²⁷ African Union 2013, *The African Union ready to contribute to the search for a solution to the crisis in Egypt*, 3 July, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20130703/african-union-ready-contribute-search-solution-crisis-egypt>

²⁸ African Union 2013, *The AU reiterates its readiness to assist Egypt to build consensus on the challenges facing it and on early restoration of constitutional order*, 4 July, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20130704/au-reiterates-its-readiness-assist-egypt-build-consensus-challenges-facing-it>

On 5 July, the PSC convened its 384th session to address the situation in Egypt. In this session, the PSC, in addition to suspending Egypt from all AU activities until the restoration of constitutional order, 'welcomed' the Chairperson's plan to dispatch a team of high-level personalities to Egypt. It also 'requested' that the preparations for the mission be expedited and 'encouraged' her to take any other measures deemed appropriate to facilitate the resolution of the crisis.

Subsequently, on 8 July, the Chairperson announced the appointment of the AU High-Level Panel for Egypt, which was composed of the following personalities:

- Alpha Oumar Konaré, former President of Mali and former Chairperson of the AU Commission (Chairperson of the Panel)
- Festus Gontebanye Mogae, former President of Botswana (Member)
- Dileita Mohamed Dileita, former Prime Minister of Djibouti (Member)

The Panel was mandated to interact with the ruling authorities and other Egyptian stakeholders to establish a constructive political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation, as well as to contribute to their efforts as they work towards a transition that would lead to an early return to constitutional order, preserve the gains of the January-February 2011 Revolution and consolidate the democratic process in their country. The chairperson further announced that the Panel will be assisted by a group of experts.

From its establishment, the Panel visited Egypt three times between July 2013 and April 2014, interacting with a wide range of Egyptian stakeholders and international actors. This occurred despite Egypt's strong rejection of the PSC's decision to suspend the country. The Panel concluded its mandate by submitting its final report²⁹ to the PSC during its 442nd session, held on 17 June 2014.³⁰

One of the Panel's notable successes, perhaps, was its guidance on how to respond to the difficult question of whether to lift the sanctions on Egypt following the May 2014 Presidential election, which resulted in the election of Field Marshal Al-Sissi, who had led the army when Morsi was ousted. The Panel held extensive discussions on this issue, solicited and received expert input including during a consultation it held with experts on 11 June 2014, and recommended the lifting of Egypt's suspension. However, it clearly articulated, based on the expert input it received, that this decision was based on specific circumstances and should not be regarded as a precedent undermining Article 25(4) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, which prohibits individuals responsible for unconstitutional changes from running for office.³¹ The influence of the Panel's

²⁹ African Union Peace and Security Council 2014, *Final Report of the African Union High-Level Panel for Egypt*, African Union, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/final-report-of-the-african-union-high-level-panel-for-egypt>

³⁰ African Union Peace and Security Council 2014, *Communiqué of the 442nd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Situation in the Arab Republic of Egypt*, 17 June, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-442th-meeting-peace-and-security-council>

³¹ See para. 83 of the final report of the AU

report is evident in the communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 442nd session, which not only endorsed the report's recommendations but also incorporated its language almost verbatim.

3.1.5. AU High-Level Panel on Sudan of 2024

The AU High-Level Panel on Sudan was established pursuant to PSC's 1185th session, held at the ministerial level on 15 November 2023.³² During that session, the Council requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to establish a High-Level Ad Hoc Panel on Sudan to engage with all Sudanese stakeholders and facilitate an inclusive process toward a civilian-led political transition.

On 17 January 2024, the Chairperson of the Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, appointed three eminent African personalities to serve as members of the Panel³³:

- Mohamed Ibn Chambas, AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns (Chair)
- Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, Former Vice President of Uganda (Member)

High-Level Panel on Egypt, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/final-report-of-the-african-union-high-level-panel-for-egypt>.

³² Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the 1185th Meeting at Ministerial Level on the Situation in Sudan, 15 November 2023*, African Union, Addis Ababa. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/1185comm-en.pdf>

³³ African Union 2024, *The Chairperson of the African Union Commission appoints High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan*, 17 January, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240117/auc-chairperson-appoints-high-level-panel-resolution-conflict-sudan>

ber)

- Francisco Madeira, Former Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) to Somalia and Head of AMISOM/ATMIS (Member)

The establishment of the High-Level Panel is part of the AU's diplomatic efforts in response to the violent conflict that erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023.

Since its formation in late January 2024, the Panel has undertaken various shuttle diplomacy initiatives to engage both Sudanese and international stakeholders. These efforts aim to pave the way for an inclusive inter-Sudanese political dialogue and to develop a framework for post-war political governance in Sudan.

At its 1218th meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government in June 2024, the PSC mandated the AU and its relevant organs, in collaboration with the Panel, to regularly monitor and report heinous crimes committed in Sudan and develop civilian protection plan.

So far, the Panel's achievement seems to be the facilitation of three rounds of consultations—held in July 2024, August 2024, and February 2025—among Sudanese civilian groups and in coordination with the IGAD Special Envoy.³⁴ These consultations were part

³⁴ For a more comprehensive tracking of diplomatic efforts by various actors, including the AU, to address the Sudan conflict, see Amani Africa's Tracker of Diplomatic Efforts on the Sudan Conflict, available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/sudan-diplomacy-tracker/>

of broader efforts to launch an inter-Sudanese political dialogue.

However, despite these engagements, no major breakthrough has been made. The inter-Sudanese dialogue has not yet been convened, and the Panel has struggled to reconcile the deep divisions among Sudanese civilian actors. In 2025, the role of the Panel faded, while Chambas continues to be AU's point person on Sudan. The Panel's role focusing on the political process was folded into the AU anchored Quintet involving the AU, UN, Arab League and European Union.³⁵

3.1.6. AU High-Level Panel on the Ethiopian Peace Process

The High-Level Panel on the Ethiopian Peace Process was established to address the devastating conflict that erupted in November 2020 between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The panel was formed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission after earlier diplomatic efforts had proven ineffective.

At the outset of the conflict, then-Chairperson of the AU, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, deployed three Special Envoys—Joaquim Chissano (former President of Mozambique), Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (former President of Liberia), and Kgalema Motlanthe (former President of South Africa)—to mediate between the parties. However, despite their engagement with the Ethiopian government, these efforts failed to yield results as Addis Ababa declined their role.

³⁵ For a critical assessment of the role of the Quintet, see Elfadil Ibrahim, *Is the 'Quintet' wasting its time with Sudan's political elites*, (5 August 2026) <https://the arab weekly.com/quintet-wasting-its-time-sudans-political-elites>

On 26 August 2021, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat appointed Nigeria's former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, as his High Representative for the Horn of Africa.³⁶ While Obasanjo's initial mandate encompassed promoting peace, security, stability, and political dialogue across the Horn of Africa, it was soon refined—during his inaugural visit to the AU Commission—to focus specifically on resolving the conflict in the Tigray region.³⁷

Despite Obasanjo's shuttle diplomacy between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, significant progress remained elusive due to lack of full confidence in his role from all parties. The TPLF expressed strong concerns over Obasanjo's neutrality, alleging he was too close to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Amid growing pressure on the AU to take effective action and in response to these concerns, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in September 2022, established a High-Level Panel on the Ethiopian Peace Process. The panel was chaired by Obasanjo and brought onboard Uhuru Kenyatta (former President of Kenya) and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (former Deputy President of South Africa and member of the AU Panel of the Wise) as members.

The PSC, during its 1115th meeting in October 2022, welcomed the formation of the High-Level Panel. This step was

³⁶ African Union 2021, *The Chairperson of the AU Commission appoints former President H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria as High Representative for the Horn of Africa*, 26 August, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20210826/appointment-president-obasanjo-high-representative-horn-africa>

³⁷ African Union, *Lessons Learned Report from the AU-led Peace process for the Tigray Region, Ethiopia*, P.11

pivotal in advancing the peace process, as it addressed concerns over impartiality—a critical factor in any mediation effort—and injected renewed credibility into the AU-led initiative.

While other factors, including military developments on the ground, also contributed to the outcome, the High-Level Panel was catalytical in providing the platform and support for the brokering of the *Pretoria Agreement* of November 2022, which successfully brought to an end active hostilities of the two-year-long conflict. It is notable that the engagement of the PSC throughout the conflict was minimal, with the AU primarily relying on the Chairperson's High Representative and, later, the High-Level Panel to play its mediation efforts, with external partners particularly the US lifting much of the weight in getting the parties to the negotiating table.

3.2. Ad Hoc Committees

3.2.1. The AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on Libya

The AU High-Level *Ad Hoc* Committee on Libya was established following the decision of the PSC at its 265th meeting on 10 March 2011.³⁸ This decision came in response to the rapidly deteriorating political and humanitarian situation in Libya. The Committee was mandated to maintain continuous engagement with all parties involved in the conflict, closely monitor developments on the ground, and facilitate an inclusive dialogue among Libyan stakeholders aimed at identifying and implementing necessary political

³⁸ African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the 265th Meeting on the Situation in Libya, 10 March 2011*, <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/265-communication-libya-eng.pdf>

reforms. Additionally, the Committee was tasked with engaging AU partners, namely, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), the European Union, and the United Nations to coordinate efforts and mobilize support for a peaceful and timely resolution to the crisis.³⁹

Initially composed of the Heads of State from South Africa, Mauritania, Mali, Uganda, and Congo-Brazzaville, along with the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Committee was entrusted with developing and implementing an AU roadmap for peace in Libya. Subsequently, the AU Assembly, at its January 2016 Summit, decided to reconstitute the Committee into a High-Level Committee of Heads of State and Government.⁴⁰ This reconfigured body included the Presidents of the Republic of Congo, South Africa, Mauritania, Gabon, and Niger, as well as the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Over time, the composition of the Committee was further expanded to incorporate neighboring countries with direct stakes in Libya's stability, including Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia.

As part of its mediation efforts in the Libyan conflict, the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on Libya developed a peace roadmap centered on civilian protection, unimpeded humanitarian access, inclusive political dialogue, and the establishment of a transitional framework aimed at addressing the root

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ African Union Assembly, *Decisions, Declarations and Resolutions of the Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union [Assembly/AU/Dec.598(XXVI)]*, 30–31 January 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/29514-assembly_au_dec_588_-_604_xxvi_e.pdf

causes of Libya's instability. Although the Libyan government at the time expressed support for the roadmap, it was rejected by the National Transitional Council (NTC), primarily because the proposal did not explicitly call for regime change, an essential demand for the NTC during the 2011 uprising against Muammar Gaddafi's regime.^{41,42}

Following its initial setback, the AU High-Level Committee on Libya remained largely inactive for several years, hindered by competing international mediation efforts and the deeply fragmented nature of Libya's political and security landscape. However, the Committee recently reactivated its engagement in Libya's peace process. A notable milestone was reached on 14 February 2025, when the AU facilitated the signing of a *Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation* in Addis Ababa.

The Charter was endorsed by a diverse group of Libyan stakeholders, including representatives from the House of Representatives, the High Council of State, an envoy of presidential candidate Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, and other influential national figures. However, key political actors such as the Head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed al-Menfi, despite being present in Addis Ababa for the AU Summit, did not sign the document.⁴³ Similarly, the Government of National

Unity (GNU) declined to participate, sending no representatives to the signing.

Although the agreement fell short of securing broad consensus among Libya's rival factions, it nonetheless represents a renewed push for African-led diplomacy in the country. Still, the Charter's impact remains limited by the absence of buy-in from key power centers in both eastern and western Libya, underscoring the persistent challenges to building an inclusive and unified national framework for peace.

3.2.2. African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan (C5)

In December 2014, the PSC decided to create a special 'High-Level Ad Hoc Committee' (C5) on South Sudan to reinforce continental support to the IGAD peace process. The PSC, during its 474th session held in December 2014, called for 'the urgent establishment of an AU High-Level Ad-hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government, comprising one representative from each of the five regions of the Continent,' to assist South Sudanese parties in achieving durable peace.⁴⁴ In March 2015, the PSC confirmed the Committee's composition (known as the "Committee of Five" or C5): Heads of State from South Africa (Chair), Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, and Rwanda.⁴⁵ It urged the

⁴¹ African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué of the 265th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the situation in Libya* (2011), PSC/PR/COMM(CCLXV). Addis Ababa.

⁴² United Nations Security Council. (2011). *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Libya*, S/2011/598.

⁴³ Amani Africa, *Consideration of the Emergency Situation in Libya* (Amani Africa, 22 May 2025) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/consideration-of-the-emergency-situation-in-libya/>

⁴⁴ African Union Peace and Security Council, 'Communiqué of the 474th Meeting on the Situation in South Sudan, 5 December 2014' (Addis Ababa, 2014) https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/474.com_south-sudan-5-12-2014.pdf

⁴⁵ African Union Peace and Security Council, 'Press Statement of the 494th Meeting on the Situation in South Sudan, 24 March 2015' (Addis Ababa, 2015) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/494-press-statement-south-sudan-24-3-2015.pdf>

C5 to meet promptly to elaborate its terms of reference and work plan in support of IGAD's mediation.⁴⁶ During the AU summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2015, the C5 was officially launched⁴⁷ and quickly agreed key elements of a work programme. South Africa initially chaired the Committee at the Heads-of-State level; ministers of member countries have since led it in rotation. In June 2015, former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn initiated the IGAD-Plus process, bringing together key international and regional actors, including the AU Ad Hoc Committee, the UN Security Council, and the European Union—to strengthen efforts toward resolving the conflict.⁴⁸

With regard to its mandate, the core responsibility of the AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan is to support the IGAD-led peace process and facilitate the implementation of peace agreements.⁴⁹ As outlined in the PSC communiqué, the C5 is explicitly tasked with 'enhancing and scaling up [AU] support to IGAD...to assist [South Sudanese] parties...to achieve durable peace.' However, there is a lack of a clearly defined mechanism or measurable criteria to effectively evaluate the actual level of support the C5 has provided to IGAD.

Although the C5 was initially established to enhance support to IGAD, its mandate has evolved over time. The

Committee's engagement was initially limited, characterized by passive and sporadic involvement in the South Sudan peace process. However, this changed significantly in 2018, when the C5 shifted toward a more active and substantive role. This transition was marked by a high-level meeting on the margins of the AU Summit in Nouakchott in June 2018, chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.⁵⁰ The meeting aimed to strengthen the C5's contribution to IGAD's efforts, underscore the added value of the Committee's involvement, and reaffirm Africa's ownership of the peace process. It also resulted in a proposed roadmap that included punitive measures against ceasefire violations.

Following the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018, the C5 intensified its engagement. This included consultations with the AU Commission Chairperson and IGAD's Special Envoy, culminating in the formal recognition of the C5 as African guarantors of the peace agreement on 21 November 2018.⁵¹ As guarantors, C5 members are expected to monitor compliance with the ceasefire and transitional provisions and to exert pressure on signatories to uphold their commitments.

As part of its recent efforts to support peace in South Sudan, the African Union

46 Ibid.

47 Amani Africa, 'Briefing of the AU Ad hoc Committee (C5) on South Sudan' (25 January 2019) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-of-the-au-ad-hoc-committee-c5-on-south-sudan/>

48 Ifediora, Obinna F. (2020) *Formulative Strategy: Why the African Union-led International Mediation in South Sudan Failed to Prevent Atrocity Crimes*. *International Studies Perspectives*.

49 494th Meeting of the PSC (n.36)

50 African Union Peace and Security Council, *Outcomes of the Ministerial Meeting of the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5)*, 30 June 2018 (African Union, 2018) <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/outcomes-of-the-ad-hoc-committee-1-7-18-final.pdf>

51 IGAD, 'The AU Ad Hoc Committee Sign the ARCSS Agreement' (South Sudan, 2023) <https://southsudan.igad.int/index.php/press/352-the-au-ad-hoc-committee-sign-the-arcss-agreement>

High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5) undertook a ministerial visit to Juba from 15 to 17 January 2025. The mission aimed to reaffirm AU solidarity with South Sudan and bolster the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).⁵² During the visit, C5 ministers engaged with President Salva Kiir, First Vice President Riek Machar, and other key national and international stakeholders, emphasizing the urgency of completing critical transitional tasks—particularly the unification of forces and the timely preparation for credible elections in 2026. The ministers pledged tangible support, including a call for C5 member states to deploy technical experts in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), constitution-making, and electoral processes. They also recommended the appointment of an AU Special Representative for South Sudan and proposed convening a donor pledging conference to advance post-conflict reconstruction. The outcome of the visit included plans for a C5 Heads-of-State summit scheduled for 4–5 February 2025 in Addis Ababa, on the margins of the AU Summit, to consolidate a unified African response; however, the summit did not materialize despite escalating tensions in the country.

The PSC, on the other hand, during its 1265th session on 31 March 2025, reiterated its call for the C5 to sustain engagement with all actors in South Sudan and support **AU and IGAD-led peace efforts**.⁵³ Notably,

⁵² African Union, *Outcome of the Ministerial Field Mission Visit of the African Union Ad Hoc High-Level Committee for South Sudan (C5) to Juba, 15–17 January 2025* (Addis Ababa, 28 January 2025) <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/outcome-of-the-c5-ministerial-visit-to-juba-01.28.pdf>

⁵³ African Union Peace and Security Council,

it requested C5's assistance in airlifting military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, to South Sudan to support the training and deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUFs).⁵⁴ At its 1283rd session in June 2025, the PSC welcomed the joint AU-IGAD solidarity mission and commended the C5 for its continued collaboration.⁵⁵ A C5 representative briefed the Council during this session, highlighting the unfolding crisis. The PSC further underscored the critical role of the C5 in de-escalation and urged all parties to respect the peace agreement and release detained officials. Amid renewed fighting, although the C5 needed to narrow its focus to de-escalation while maintaining support for the R-ARCSS, no tangible efforts or progress have been observed.

Following a ministerial visit to Juba, the C5 held a summit level meeting on 15 February 2026 on the sidelines of the AU summit calling for inclusive political dialogue and full compliance with and implementation of the R-ARCSS. Apart from underscoring the imperative for national dialogue between the parties, the C5 meeting endorsed the appointment of a former head of state for mediating between the signatories to the 2018 revitalised peace agreement. Subsequently, the AU Commission Chairperson appointed Jakaya Kikwete as the AU High-Representative for the Horn

'Communiqué of the 1265th Meeting on the Situation in South Sudan, 18 March 2025' (Addis Ababa, 2025) <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1265.comm-en.pdf>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ African Union Peace and Security Council, *'Communiqué of the 1283rd Meeting on the Situation in South Sudan, 12 June 2025'* (Addis Ababa, 2025) https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1283.comm_en.pdf

of Africa and the Red Sea,⁵⁶ with a role on South Sudan.

3.2.3. AU Summit Troika on the Issue of Western Sahara

Through Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.693(XXXI), adopted in 2018, the AU established an ad hoc African mechanism to address the long-standing Western Sahara dispute.⁵⁷ This mechanism, composed of the AU Troika—the outgoing, current, and incoming AU Chairpersons, alongside the Chairperson of the AU Commission, was mandated to provide support to the UN-led peace process. The decision tasked the Troika with encouraging both parties—the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) to demonstrate flexibility, mobilize broad continental support for the UN efforts, and engage in consultations with the UN on the substance of a mutually acceptable compromise. Furthermore, the mechanism was expected to report regularly to the AU Assembly and, where necessary, to the PSC at the level of Heads of State and Government. Importantly, the Assembly also decided that the Western Sahara issue would henceforth only be discussed within this specific framework and at the prescribed high level, effectively removing the matter from the reach of AU's standing peace and security decision-making body except at the level of Heads of State and Government.

⁵⁶ See <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20260325/au-chairperson-appoints-president-jakaya-kikwete-au-high-representative>

⁵⁷ African Union 2018, *Decisions, declarations and resolution: 31st Ordinary Session, 1-2 July 2018, Nouakchott, Mauritania, Assembly/AU/Dec.690–712(XXXI)*, African Union, Addis Ababa, available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/36130-assembly_au_dec_690_-_712_xxxi_e.pdf

Despite its establishment, the AU Troika mechanism has remained largely inactive since 2018. No formal meetings have been convened under the Troika framework, and no reports have been submitted to the Assembly or PSC. This dormancy of the Troika, in situations of renewed tension, invited debate on the necessity of AU's engagement pending the activation of the Troika. Despite divergence of views, a more purposeful reading of Assembly Decision 693 suggests that both the Assembly and PSC at **Summit level** may deliberate on the issue if necessary. Indeed, when tension spiked into incidents of hostilities, in a decision of the 14th Extraordinary Summit on Silencing the Guns, paragraph 15 of decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV), called on the PSC 'at Heads of State and Government level' to engage both parties to de-escalate tensions.⁵⁸ The PSC invoked this paragraph when it convened its 984th session at summit level.⁵⁹ The PSC adopted a set of recommendations, including revitalizing the Troika's engagement, urging both Morocco and SADR to cease hostilities and pursue dialogue, reopening the AU office in Laayoune, and conducting a field mission to the region.

⁵⁸ African Union 2020, *Decision and Declaration of the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on Silencing the Guns in Africa, 6 December, Johannesburg, Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV) & Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XIV)*, African Union, Addis Ababa, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/ext-assembly-au-dec-1-and-decl-1-xiv-e.pdf>

⁵⁹ African Union Peace and Security Council 2021, *Communiqué of the 984th Meeting at the Level of Heads of State and Government on Western Sahara, 9 March, Addis Ababa*, available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/984th-meeting-on-western-sahara.pdf>

3.2.4. PSC Ad Hoc Presidential Committee on Sudan

On 21 June 2024, during its 1218th session, the PSC decided to establish an Ad Hoc Presidential Committee, chaired by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda.⁶⁰ The Committee was composed of one Head of State or Government from each of Africa's five regions, with representatives from Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, and Nigeria. Its mandate was to facilitate direct engagements between the leaders of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The Committee was scheduled to hold its inaugural meeting on 23 October 2024 in Entebbe, Uganda. However, the meeting was ultimately cancelled due to delays in responses from the warring parties. Efforts to convene the meeting have since failed on at least two occasions—on the margins of the AU Summit in February 2025 in Addis Ababa, and during the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting in July 2025 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. As a result, more than two-year after its establishment, the *Ad Hoc* Presidential Committee has yet to hold its inaugural meeting, let alone facilitate direct negotiations between the leaders of the two warring factions.

⁶⁰ African Union Peace and Security Council 2024, *Communiqué of the 1218th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council (at Heads of State Level) on the Situation in Sudan, 21 June, Addis Ababa*, available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/PSC-1218-HoSG-Communique-Sudan-EN.pdf>

IV. INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF AD HOC MECHANISMS

While the successes or failures of ad hoc mediation mechanisms cannot be attributed solely to their design and operation—given the influence of various external factors—the AU's experience with such mechanisms over the past fifteen years reveals several key insights. These insights highlight factors that have significantly shaped the outcomes of mediation efforts and should be considered in the design and implementation of future mediation processes.

4.1. Strategic Leadership

One of the key success factors for *ad hoc* mechanisms is the strategic leadership that the AU assumes through setting the agenda for resolution of conflicts, articulating a clear strategy for resolution founded on factual diagnosis of the crisis/conflict and mandate early on a dedicated mechanism for leading AU's effort for peace making. The efficacy of AU's mechanisms for making peace and firm up AU's role in the first place depends on the quality of political strategy and the strength of the regional and continental consensus that anchors such mechanisms. The various experiences including the AUHIP and the Ad Hoc Presidential Committee on Libya show that for AU's peace processes to facilitate and assert AU's strategic leadership, a political strategy is necessary but not sufficient. It additionally requires *cohesion of AU actors* and diplomatic skills for securing the confidence of the conflict parties, nurturing and consolidating regional and continental consensus and support and mobilizing international alignment.

4.2. Appointing the members able to facilitate their access and mobilise influence

The effectiveness of such mechanisms largely depends on the mechanism's credibility and its ability to exert diplomatic and political influence on the parties to the conflict as well as other stakeholders. This, in turn, hinges on selecting members who not only hold high-level positions—such as former or current heads of state or government—to provide the necessary political and diplomatic weight, but who are also carefully chosen for their skills, experience, and unwavering commitment. This principle was clearly demonstrated in the work of the African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD) and the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), where the chair, Thabo Mbeki, along with other panel members, exhibited strategic foresight and dedication. Their leadership played a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of the Sudan–South Sudan mediation process and in reframing the Darfur conflict as part of the broader 'Sudan crisis in Darfur,' as characterized in the AUPD's report.

As highlighted above, the credibility of an *ad hoc* mechanism is a crucial factor in its success. However, credibility is shaped by multiple elements—one of the most important being the appointment of the right individuals to the mechanism. This involves not only selecting persons with the appropriate profile, experience, and commitment, but also ensuring they are perceived as neutral and acceptable by all parties to the conflict and have their own standing for securing access and mobilizing influence. In any mediation process, the effectiveness of the mediators depends significantly on their ability to

gain the trust and cooperation of the conflicting parties.

This issue became particularly evident during the AU-led mediation process in Ethiopia. Despite his extensive political and diplomatic experience, the Chairperson's High Representative, Olusegun Obasanjo, faced challenges in advancing the mediation effort due to perceptions of bias by one of the parties, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) expressing reservations about his neutrality. In mediation, whether such concerns are real or perceived is less important than their impact on the process—any doubts regarding a mediator's impartiality must be addressed to move the process forward. As noted in the *Lessons Learned Report from the AU-Led Peace Process for the Tigray Region, Ethiopia*, the AU's decision to appoint a panel of mediators, including figures such as Uhuru Kenyatta, was instrumental in guiding the process toward a mutually acceptable outcome.

4.3. Strong Support System

Another critical factor influencing the effectiveness of *ad hoc* mechanisms is the presence of a robust support system, including qualified technical experts and adequate financial resources. In previous PSC communiqués, the Council has explicitly stipulated that when such mechanisms are established, they must be supported by a team of experts. For example, when the PSC created the High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire (at its 259th session), it clearly provided for expert support. Similarly, when the Chairperson of the AU Commission established the High-Level Panel for Egypt, it was specifically announced that the panel would be assisted by a group of experts. The African Union Panel on Darfur (AUPD)

benefited from the contributions of nine prominent experts, while the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) drew on a wide range of technical expertise from across the globe, including specialists in oil, economics, law, border demarcation, and other relevant areas.⁶¹ This expert input was further complemented by support from AU staff. In contrast, the absence of such technical and logistical support can severely undermine the credibility and effectiveness of ad hoc mechanisms.

Financial resources also constitute an important component of the support system. Mediation processes require sustained financial investment, given their engagement with a wide range of stakeholders over extended periods. It is therefore essential not only to ensure continuous funding but also to guarantee financial autonomy to shield the process from external political influence. A notable example is the AU Commission's partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), a Pan-African institution with no political stake in the conflict, which provided crucial financial support to the mediation process in Ethiopia. This marked the first time that the AU and AfDB jointly leveraged their respective comparative advantages in mediation—an approach that could be replicated in future peace processes.

⁶¹ Alex de Waal and Willow Berridge, *The Sudans: Africa's Search for Peace, Democracy and Two Viable States* (2026). Abdul Mohamed, *The Last Serious African Mediation? Reflections on and Lessons from the AUHIP Experience and the Meaning of African Political Agency*, Ideas Indaba, (2 June 2026) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/thelast-serious-african-mediation-reflections-on-and-lessons-from-the-auhip-experience-and-the-meaning-of-african-political-agency/>

4.4. Strategic guidance and follow up by the PSC

The mediation process led by the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) represents a standard-setting initiative on multiple levels. It stands out as a rare example where the strategic guidance and leadership of the PSC were effectively matched by high-caliber personalities of mediators, supported by technically proficient staff from the AU Commission.⁶² A review of the PSC communiqué adopted at its 319th meeting clearly shows the document's substantive depth and richness, providing a comprehensive and detailed roadmap for addressing the escalating tensions between Sudan and South Sudan. This communiqué was notable not only for its strategic clarity but also for the inclusion of specific timelines, which significantly facilitated follow-up and implementation.

This rare confluence of high-level mediation, robust institutional support, and strategic oversight enhanced the credibility of the process and garnered broad backing from other international actors, notably the United Nations. It is particularly noteworthy that the UN Security Council adopted the PSC's roadmap—an achievement that broke a longstanding impasse between the United States and Russia. As highlighted in a lessons-learned article on the AUHIP, this moment illustrates how effective AU-led processes, underpinned by strong PSC leadership, can shape international

⁶² Abdul Mohamed, *The Last Serious African Mediation? Reflections on and Lessons from the AUHIP Experience and the Meaning of African Political Agency*, Ideas Indaba, (2 June 2026) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/thelast-serious-african-mediation-reflections-on-and-lessons-from-the-auhip-experience-and-the-meaning-of-african-political-agency/>

consensus and unlock progress in complex peace efforts.⁶³

On the contrary, the AU's mediation efforts in Libya were significantly weakened by lack of support for its role on the part of the Transitional National Council (TNC), which sought AU's condemnation of Gaddafi or his removal. Enjoying enormous support by leading NATO countries and bent on its demand for regime change instead of negotiated settlement, the TNC rejected the AU's proposed roadmap for peace. Furthermore, as stated in the report of the Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Committee that was presented to the 32nd AU Assembly Ordinary session, despite the momentum generated by the Chair of the Committee, the High-Level Committee suffered from internal inconsistencies, as certain members adopted conflicting positions—reflecting the persistent difficulty of achieving a unified African voice on the Libyan issue.⁶⁴

These internal fractures and the AU's perceived alignment with Gaddafi⁶⁵ critically damaged its ability to foster trust and cooperation among Libyan factions. Compounding this challenge was the AU's limited on-the-ground presence and inconsistent engagement, which stood in stark contrast to the sustained

involvement of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Without operational continuity or strong local visibility, the AU was unable to follow through effectively on its peace initiatives or build lasting relationships with stakeholders. This experience underscores that in complex conflicts, formal neutrality must be matched by sustained, credible engagement and a widely accepted perception of impartiality.

In the case of the High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire, AU's decision to establish a High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire signaled a shift toward a more structured and collective mediation effort. However, while the PSC provided initial guidance and legitimacy to the Panel, its role in ensuring sustained political oversight and follow-up was limited. The appointment of a High Representative to implement the Panel's recommendations without broad-based consultation further undermined the credibility of the follow-up process. The PSC's inability to maintain strategic momentum and adapt to political resistance ultimately highlighted a gap between initial guidance and long-term conflict resolution strategy.

4.5. Strong Coordination with Key Regional and International Actors

One of the major challenges facing the current peace process in Sudan is the proliferation of initiatives launched by a wide range of actors without adequate coordination. The existence of multiple, parallel, and uncoordinated peace efforts encourages forum shopping by the parties to the conflict. As a result, actors who could have collectively exerted meaningful leverage to bring the parties to a peaceful settlement end up competing with and undermining each other's efforts.

⁶³ See Alex de Waal and Abdul Mohammed (2024), 'Defining the Crisis in the Sudans: Lessons from the African Union High-Level Panels for Sudan and South Sudan,' Thabo Mbeki Foundation in association with World Peace Foundation.

⁶⁴ African Union, Report of H.E. Mr Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo, Chair of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya, Assembly of the Union Thirty-Second Ordinary Session, Addis Ababa, 10–11 February 2019, https://archives.au.int/bitstream/handle/123456789/8999/Assembly%20AU%209%20XXXII_E.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

⁶⁵ Ibid.

While the ongoing initiatives in Sudan illustrate how fragmented efforts can complicate the peace process, the AUHIP offers a contrasting example of effective coordination. In its mediation between Sudan and South Sudan, the AUHIP succeeded in rallying key actors, including the AU, IGAD, the UN, and the United States around a single, unified process. This collective backing gave the mediation process the necessary diplomatic and political weight to succeed. The AUHIP's ability to secure such broad-based support is a reflection of both the credibility of its mediation efforts and the strength of its coordination with key stakeholders. As an analysis on the lessons from AUHIP pointed out one way through which this was achieved was by closely integrating into the mediation framework 'United Nations, IGAD, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway—the Troika.'⁶⁶

4.6. Inclusiveness

Another key factor contributing to the success of a peace process is the adoption of an inclusive approach. A notable example is the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), whose report is widely recognized for its depth and comprehensive analysis of the crisis. One of the main reasons for the report's richness is the extensive and inclusive engagement that informed its findings. The Panel conducted four missions to Sudan, spent a total of 40

days in the country, and consulted with over 2,700 representatives in Darfur and approximately 400 in Khartoum. These efforts were complemented by consultations with regional countries and representatives of the international community.

In the case of its mediation efforts in Libya, at the beginning AU's approach has been relatively inclusive in theory, with the High-Level Committee expressing its intent to engage a wide range of Libyan stakeholders, including tribal leaders, civil society, and representatives of rival governments in the east and west. However, in practice, its ability to convene and secure commitment from all key actors has been constrained. Notably, many influential militias and external backers, who play decisive roles in Libya's conflict dynamics, have not been effectively integrated into the AU's mediation spaces. This exclusion has limited the comprehensiveness of the AU's approach during the early days of the conflict. However, this has recently improved as the Committee has intensified its mediation efforts to foster an inclusive political process as indicated during its meeting held in Brazzaville in February 2024. The renewed effort has resulted in the signing of the Libyan Reconciliation Charter, signed in Addis Ababa on 14 February 2025. Although the mediation effort engaged a range of Libyan stakeholders during the process, key political and military actors did not participate in or endorse the final Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. The absence of influential parties such as the Libyan National Army (LNA) and representatives of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU) highlighted a lack of consensus, raising concerns about the Charter's legitimacy and the prospects for its effective

⁶⁶ Abdul Mohamed, *The last serious African Mediation? Reflections on and Lessons from the AUHIP Experience and the Meaning of African Political Agency*, Ideas Indaba (2 June 2026) <https://amani-africa-et.org/thelast-serious-african-mediation-reflections-on-and-lessons-from-the-auhip-experience-and-the-meaning-of-african-political-agency/>

implementation.

While the AU demonstrated a clear commitment to inclusivity through dialogue initiatives and coordination with international partners, its failure to secure the participation of all major factions points to deeper political divisions and limitations in the AU's diplomatic leverage. The partial nature of the agreement undermines its potential to serve as a foundation for lasting peace. As such, moving forward, the efforts of the Committee must prioritize deeper engagement with excluded stakeholders, build trust among rival factions, and strengthen collaboration with other key international actors to facilitate a genuinely inclusive and sustainable political settlement in Libya.

V. CONCLUSION

Over the past 15 years, the AU has increasingly relied on ad hoc mechanisms, such as High-Level Panels and High-Level Ad Hoc Committees, as a central part of its peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. These mechanisms reflect the AU's ability to adapt its mediation strategies to specific contexts, often drawing on the influence of sitting heads of state, the gravitas of senior political figures and technical experts to tackle some of Africa's most persistent and complex conflicts. Notable examples include the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan, the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur, and the C5 Committee on South Sudan. Their impact shows that success often depends on strong strategic leadership, institutional continuity, broad-based engagement, and close coordination with both regional and international actors.

Yet, the AU's track record also highlights several persistent challenges. In situations like Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, and the most recent case of Sudan, internal divisions within the committees, limited authority to enforce decisions, and the absence of sustained political backing have all hampered progress. In some instances, the AU has struggled to earn and maintain the trust of key stakeholders, undermining both the inclusiveness and perceived legitimacy of its initiatives. While recent developments, such as the Libyan Peace and Reconciliation Charter, reflect renewed commitment, their potential is diminished when major actors refuse to engage.

To enhance the credibility and effectiveness of future mediation efforts, AU *ad hoc* mechanisms need to be adequately resourced, start with a clear definition of the problem to be solved drawing on the lessons from the AUHIP, cogent articulation of a mediation strategy tailored to the dynamics of the specific conflict, guided by clear strategic direction from the Peace and Security Council, and anchored in inclusive, transparent processes that acknowledge the complexities on the ground. In the end, the AU's ability to learn from past experiences and maintain consistent implementation will be critical to shaping the long-term relevance of its mediation role across the continent. This underscores the imperative for systematic documentation of lessons learned and the integration of those lessons in informing the design and practice of AU peace processes.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LESSONS FOR REVIEWING THE APSA

The grim security situation across the continent, the weakening of the multilateral system, and intensifying global geopolitical tensions have made the PSC and the broader AU more important today than ever before. In this context, the PSC and the AU can no longer afford to operate in a business-as-usual manner. Yet, paradoxically, the AU appears to be performing even less effectively than in previous years, with the PSC barely maintaining its core functions and losing credibility as it cedes agency in conflict resolution to external actors who are playing increasingly dominant roles.

There is an urgent need to reclaim the AU's golden era of ambitious, proactive, and sustained peace and security diplomacy—an era when diplomacy served as the primary instrument for conflict resolution on the continent. The AU has already demonstrated its capacity and will through credible and effective peacemaking initiatives, such as the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), showing that a more assertive and effective role is possible, albeit with making necessary adjustments to meet the demands of the changing security and geopolitical context.

However, reclaiming this role requires critical reflection on the current context that has led to the AU's diminishing influence, as well as lessons drawn from past experiences. The ongoing review of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) offers a timely and valuable opportunity for such introspection.

In this light, the following specific measures should be considered to strengthen the AU's peacemaking efforts within the framework of the APSA review:

6.1. Prioritize conflict prevention

Despite the cost-effectiveness of prevention and the emphasis on its prevention mandate in the PSC Protocol, the PSC has often taken a reactive approach, engaging in crisis management only after situations have escalated into full-blown security crises. While the rhetoric and normative recognition of the importance of conflict prevention are well established, the PSC's actions have not consistently reflected this commitment.⁶⁷ Its track record in anticipating and preventing crises before they fully erupt leaves much to be desired.

Many of the conflicts now dominating the continent's security landscape did not emerge suddenly; they are the result of long-simmering tensions stemming from interconnected factors such as governance deficits, political marginalization, environmental pressures, and socio-economic challenges. Yet, the PSC's focus has remained predominantly on conflict management, with persistent gaps in early warning and early action hindering its ability to proactively address emerging threats.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Amani Africa, *Special Research Report No.3, 'The Reform of the AU: Towards the Peace and Security Council 'We Want''* (August 2018), p.7. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-reform-of-the-au-towards-the-peace-and-security-council-we-want/>

⁶⁸ See Amani Africa, 'The African Union Peace and Security Council at 20', pp.17-18; and Oita Etyang, Taye Abdulkadir, Claudia Masah and Tatenda Mapiro, *ACCORD Policy and Practice brief, 'Evaluation of the African Union Peace and Security*

While technical and operational limitations exist that hamper the PSC's ability to scan early warning signals and translate them into timely actions, political challenges are also a significant barrier. The notable challenge in this regard is 'culture of denialism' by Member States and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), who often downplay credible early warning reports of looming crises and invoke sovereignty to resist timely intervention.⁶⁹ A case in point is the terrorism crisis in Cabo Delgado of Mozambique, where it took more than four years for the situation to feature on the agenda of the PSC after the crisis erupted—far too late to prevent it from escalating.

Another key area for improvement is the integration of emerging security threats—such as public health emergencies, climate-induced risks, and the impact of emerging technologies on peace and security—into the AU's early warning system to facilitate more timely and effective responses to these evolving challenges.

Council: Lessons from 20 years of intervention and recommendations for the future', pp.6-7, available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/publication/evaluation-of-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-lessons-from-20-years-of-intervention-and-recommendations-for-the-future/>

⁶⁹ The PSC recognized the challenge of denialism on several occasions, including its 1208th session, held on 16 April 2024.

6.2. Rebuild the AU's agency through credible peacemaking processes and the restoration of the primacy of peace diplomacy as the main conflict and governance crises management and resolution tool

The governance and security challenges and landscape on the continent demands that the AU recalibrates its role as credible peacemaking actor and restores the prime place of honor of diplomacy as the main conflict and governance crisis management and resolution tool. With rising global geopolitical tensions and a weakened multilateral system, the effective functioning of the AU is now a strategic imperative. However, the AU's current performance falls short of its past achievements, with the PSC struggling to maintain its core functions and losing credibility.

The AU must reinvigorate its proactive, robust and sustained peace and security diplomacy. As the continent faces complex and prolonged political transitions, the impending breakdown of regional orders in West Africa and the Sahel, and the threat of such breakdowns in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions, as well as rising inter-state tensions—such as those between the DRC and Rwanda, and Ethiopia and Somalia—along with their far-reaching consequences for regional peace and security, the PSC cannot remain passive but must restore its robust diplomacy as a major tool for conflict management.

AU's ability to regain its leadership role in conflict resolution largely depends on its capacity to initiate credible and effective mediation processes, and doing so proactively and in a sustained way. The AU

should be the first to be seized of situations that warrant preventive action or peace processes for resolution. It needs to institute a process for the careful selection of members for *ad hoc* mechanisms, the provision of **technically sound and diplomatically robust** strategic guidance and oversight, and effective coordination with all relevant actors—including regional and international organizations and countries with leverage over conflict parties.

Apart from its role in reducing polarisation and establishing common ground between rival powers as highlighted in UN Secretary-General's New [Agenda for Peace](#), in the African context, the effective functioning of the PSC and the APSA and the mobilisation of collective action for peace and security depend on AU's effectiveness in **building of consensus and the political will of member states** for supporting such collective action. This requires the reaffirmation of the commitment of member states to AU instruments and to work collectively and for **the AU Commission** to enhance close working relationship with and win the trust of member states, through demonstrating impartiality and competence and by leveraging AU's norms and policies by which states are bound. **peace** This necessitates that the AU Commission, in coordination with the PSC, directly and through its *ad hoc* mechanisms a) deploys the full scope of its peace and security mandate, b) leverages the peace and security, governance and regional integration norms and policies of the AU that underpin the APSA, c) invest in sustained and close communication with member states both through their representatives in Addis Ababa and directly through periodic visits for keeping them abreast of AU's efforts and enlisting

their support, d) the periodic production of diplomatically astute and technically and operationally sound reports and briefings for guiding and regularly adapting informed strategic decision-making, and e) actively seek and facilitate the building of the consensus of member states required for collective action through regular targeted engagement.

6.3. Strengthen technical and institutional support systems

A robust support structure is essential to enable *ad hoc* mechanisms to function effectively. While the Mediation and Dialogue Division within the Conflict Management Directorate of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS) is tasked with supporting the AU's preventive diplomacy and mediation work, questions remain as to whether its current staffing and technical capacity are sufficient to meet continental demands. The Division should be strengthened in both areas. Equally importantly, instead of trying to make the Division the technical anchor for all *ad hoc* mechanisms and AU peace processes, the focus should be on its role in becoming the facilitator and strategic coordinator of the specific structure that each AU *ad hoc* mechanism or peace process relies on for the execution of its role in advancing peace in the specific situation assigned to it.

6.4. Anchoring conflict management and resolution interventions on strategy tailored to each conflict situation

The AU needs to have a requirement for **the development of a conflict management and resolution strategy tailored to each conflict situation** backed by the requisite

technical, diplomatic and financial resources. The strategy needs not only to ensure the design and use of conflict resolution tools tailored to the specificities of each conflict situation informed by such strategy but also to provide guidance on the means and methods of ensuring the effectiveness of the use of such tools.

6.5. A shift from security-heavy approach to a comprehensive strategy underpinning the primacy of politics

The success of some of the ad hoc mechanisms did not depend on leveraging security tools. To the contrary, the successes registered by these mechanisms was a result of an approach anchored on the primacy of politics. Over the years, a noticeable trend in the AU approach to the surge in conflicts across the continent has been an increased emphasis on hard security measures to address peace and security challenges, particularly in relation to the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. This highly securitized approach, sometimes referred to as the 'militarization' of the AU's peace and security response,⁷⁰ can be counterproductive and may even reinforce the very dynamics it seeks to resolve, as the far-reaching consequences of such approach—such as human rights violations and abuses—can be powerful drivers for recruitment into terrorist groups, perpetuating the cycle of violence.⁷¹ Moreover, by prioritizing military solutions, critical human, technical, and financial resources are diverted away from addressing underlying issues such as governance deficits and development

challenges.⁷²

While security measures are undoubtedly critical in addressing the immediate threat posed by terrorists and in creating an enabling environment for non-military measures, it has become evident that no amount of force alone will fundamentally alter the terrorism landscape in Africa. Without tackling the structural socio-economic and political deficiencies on which terrorism thrives, sustainable peace will remain elusive.

⁷⁰ Amani Africa, 'The Reform of the AU', P.10.

⁷¹ United Nations, *Our Common Agenda* Policy Brief 9, 'A New Agenda for Peace', P.13.

⁷² Amani Africa, 'The Growing Threat of Terrorism in Africa', p.7.

Annex – AU Ad hoc mechanisms for governance and peace and security

Ad Hoc Mechanisms Established by the AU	Name	Date Established	Established by
High-Level Panels	AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD)	21 July 2008	PSC invited the AU Commission to establish the Panel
	AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan & South Sudan (AUHIP)	29 October 2009	PSC requested the AU Commission to establish the Panel
	AU High-Level Panel on Côte d'Ivoire	28 January 2011	PSC requested the AU Commission to establish the Panel
	High-Level Panel for Egypt	3 July 2013	AU Commission Chairperson appointed the members of the Panel and the PSC endorsed
	AU High-Level Panel on the Ethiopian Peace Process	September 2022	AU Commission Chairperson appointed the members of the Panel and the PSC endorsed
	AU High-Level Panel on the Resolution of Conflict in Sudan (HLP-Sudan)	15 November 2023	AU Commission Chairperson appointed the members of the Panel as per PSC's request
Ad Hoc Committees	The AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on Libya	10 March 2011	PSC decided to establish the Committee
	AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5)	Established on 5 December 2014 (revitalized role in 2018)	PSC decided to undertake consultations for the Committee's establishment
	AU Summit Troika on the Issue of Western Sahara	2 July 2018	AU Assembly decided to establish an African Mechanism
	Ad Hoc Presidential Committee for Sudan	21 June 2024	PSC decided to establish the committee

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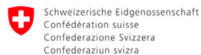
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