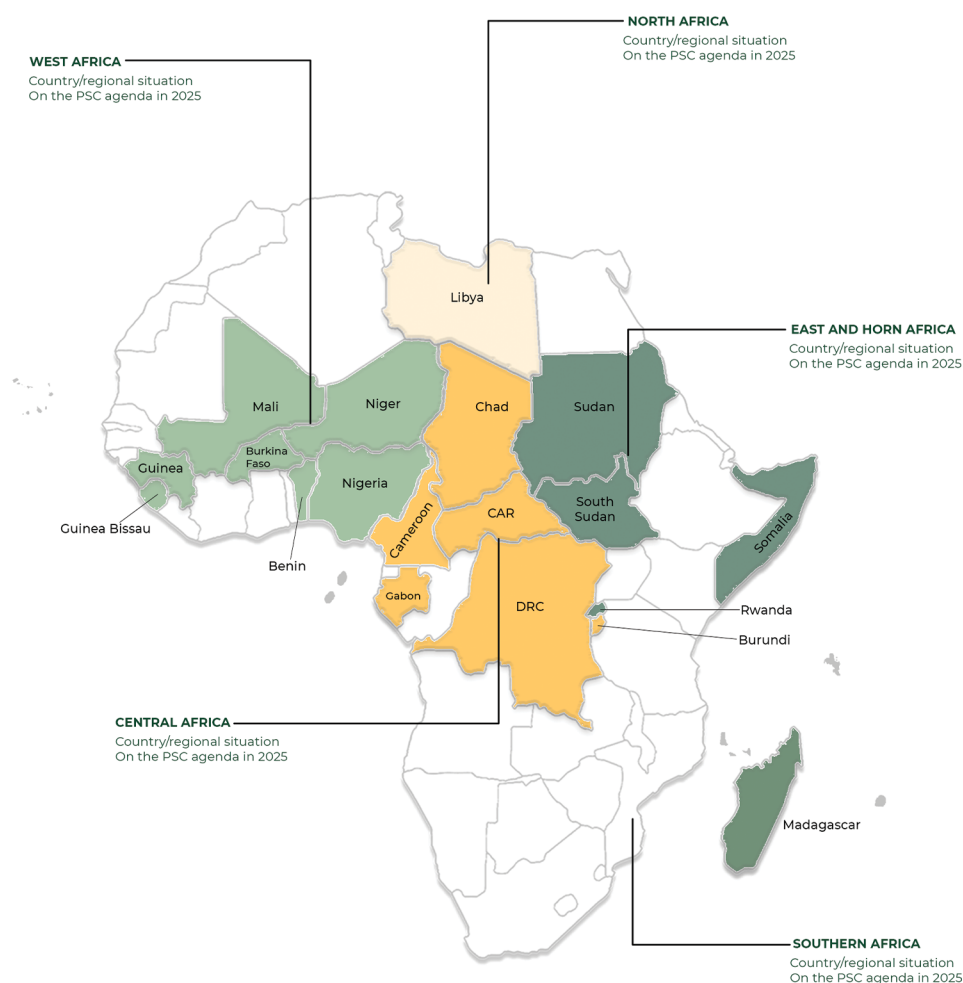


AFRICAN UNION FLOATING ADrift AS A NEW ERA OF INSECURITY ENTRENCHES IN AFRICA & ANARCHY IS LOOSED UPON THE WORLD

The 2025 Review of the Peace and Security Council

AMANI AFRICA

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I. ABOUT THIS REVIEW

2025 turned out to be a year when ‘[t]hings fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.’¹ The conflicts and crises as well as geopolitical events shaping the political and security landscape of Africa unfolded during the year as ‘things fall apart’ in the world. Fundamentally, the bleak peace and security situation of the continent of the past years have become acute, crystallising the continent’s ‘new era of insecurity and instability’. As noted in a recent article prefacing this annual review, ‘[a] cross the continent, armed conflict, state fragmentation, humanitarian collapse, economic distress, climate shocks, democratic erosion, and geopolitical entanglement are converging with a simultaneity and intensity unseen in recent decades.’² The presence of such conflict and crisis situations is not fundamentally particular to 2025.³ Apart from their intensification, what stands out and became apparent from the political, diplomatic and security events of 2025 is that many of the conflicts and crises are here to stay for the foreseeable future.

¹ William Butler Yeats, *The second coming*, 1920.

² Abdul Mohammed and Solomon Dersso, Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, ‘The Gathering Storm Facing Africa in 2026: Entrenching Conflicts, Fractured Order, and Eroding Agency’, 14 January 2026. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-gathering-storm-facing-africa-in-2026-entrenching-conflicts-fractured-order-and-eroding-agency/>

³ Amani Africa, Special Research Report, ‘Memo to the New AU Commission Leadership from the Roaring Guns on AU’s First Decade of Silencing the Guns’, October 2024. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/memo-to-the-new-au-commission-leadership-from-the-roaring-guns-on-aus-first-decade-of-silencing-the-guns/>

As expounded further in some details below, these conflict and crises events on the continent carry grave strategic ramifications on their own. Yet, they acquire particular significance in the context of ‘things fall(ing) apart’. The anarchy that ‘is loosed upon the world’ (found recognition in Davos in the context particularly of the order bending events of 2025)⁴ impacted on continental peace and security. It did so, among others, by affecting African states through the politico-institutional and socio-economic anxiety and uncertainty it imposed on them. Additionally, despite its impact on the engagement of global actors in advancing peace and security in Africa not being to the level of the late 1990s in which, according to Kofi Annan, ‘Africa is left to fend for itself,’⁵ it has led to the shifting of both priorities on the part of the traditional global partners and the approach to promoting peace from sustainable settlement of conflicts to transactional ceasefire deals.

As such, this review of PSC’s work during the year is informed by the evolving dynamics and trends of the continent’s peace and security landscape, but building on the grounded analysis from the previous year. This review thus provides an in-depth analysis, examining PSC’s activities during the review period, emerging trends and key highlights of

⁴ Principled and pragmatic: Canada’s path’, address delivered at the World Economic Forum, 26 January 2026. Available at: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2026/01/20/principled-and-pragmatic-canadas-path-prime-minister-carney-addresses>

⁵ UN, ‘The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa’, report of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Security Council / by Kofi Annan, 1998. Available at: <http://www.un-ngls.org/documents/publications.en/voices.africa/number8/2sg.htm>

its engagements, shifts in its working methods, and areas where progress was registered or where the PSC fell short. The analysis ensures that the review of how the AU and its PSC fared in discharging the sacred mandate of advancing peace and security in Africa is not abstracted from the broader continental and global security and geopolitical context.

What this year's analysis reveals is that the question is not whether or not the AU and the PSC are necessary and relevant. The necessity and relevance of the AU is beyond question. The question is whether the AU and the PSC are exerting the level of effort and deploying the type of collective action required to materially contribute towards changing the course of conflicts and crises towards mitigation and resolution. In this respect, the stark reality is that the effort and actions barely make such material contribution.

The Review draws primarily on Amani Africa's continuous tracking and analysis of the peace and security developments on the continent, supplemented by its policy engagement throughout the year. It is also grounded in its close monitoring and analysis of the PSC's outcome documents and AU's peace and policy actions. The Annual Review is structured in three main parts. The first part presents a critical analysis of Africa's peace and security landscape in 2025. The second part provides a detailed account of the key highlights of the PSC's activities during the year under review. The third part offers concluding observations and recommendations.

II. AFRICA'S PEACE AND SECURITY LANDSCAPE IN 2025: CRYSTALISATION OF THE NEW ERA OF INSTABILITY AND UNRAVELING OF MULTILATERAL ORDERS

2025 was a year that involved not only the continuation of the troubling trends of the previous years but also the deepening of these trends accelerated by new dynamics. Most significantly, it was a year that saw the entrenchment and normalisation of conflicts and crises. As the analysis in this review establishes, from the Red Sea coast in the Horn of Africa, Central Africa and the Sahel to the Atlantic coast in West Africa, conflicts and crises escalated, continued to inflict the most suffering on civilians, their geographic spread widened and their complexity and internationalisation heightened.

The factors that shape and characterise the foregoing features of the conflict and crisis situations in 2025 include the proliferation of arms and expansion of the use of new technologies of war notably drones, widening regional tensions and rivalry, intensification of external intervention, persisting socio-economic suffering (owing, among others, to global financial and economic inequities), worsening crises of governance and continuing resilience and proliferation of militant and armed rebel groups. From Sudan to Somalia, the Sahel and eastern DRC, these dynamics mean that the conflicts have evolved into becoming largely internationalised and increasingly drone-dominated conflicts shaped by cross border and international arms flows and the regional and global rivalry for

influence.

These conflict and crisis events and dynamics of 2025 crystallised what the previous edition of the annual review called a 'new era of instability and insecurity.'⁶ Although its impact on Africa and similarly positioned parts of the world could be more profound, the emergence and entrenchment of large number of conflicts as a defining feature of the peace and security landscape of the continent is not by no means unique to Africa. Thus, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in its Humanitarian Outlook 2026 stated the harsh reality that '[a]rmed conflict is now a defining feature of our times'.⁷ Similarly, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), the institute that runs one of the major conflict datasets, sternly observed that 'high level of conflicts are the new normal' globally.⁸

What stands out from 2025 is not merely how conflicts and crises have accelerated and entrenched across many parts of the continent. As the review highlights, it is also the year when the role of AU and regional actors in peace-making, which has been receding during the previous years, became increasingly displaced by external actors. This is despite the continuing normative, rhetorical and legitimising significance of AU's role. At

the same time, the crises of multilateralism at both the continental and regional levels also became acute during the year. Thus, '[a]t precisely the moment Africa needs collective action, its multilateral institutions are at their weakest. Political capture, failure to articulate clear vision and mobilize consensus of member states, inconsistency, underfunding, and external bypassing have eroded credibility and enforcement capacity.'⁹

2.1. Crystallization of the new era of insecurity and instability

2.1.1 Escalation and expansion of conflicts

The conflicts and crises prevalent on the continent at the start of 2025 did not show any sign of slowing down during the year. Instead, they registered acceleration and expansion. There are many countries on the continent that enjoy stability and peace. Yet, the overall picture of the peace and security landscape in Africa is characterised by significant deterioration. From West Africa and the Sahel to the eastern DRC and Sudan in the Horn of Africa, the conflict and crisis situations on the agenda of the PSC witnessed intensification in fighting, territorial expansion and humanitarian impact as well as democratic governance regression including electoral thuggery.

In the Central Africa/Great Lakes region, the conflict in Eastern DRC showed the most escalation. The major offensive that the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23) armed group launched reportedly with support from Rwanda¹⁰ and the resulting

6 See Amani Africa, 'Africa in a New Era of Insecurity and Instability: The 2024 Review of the Peace and Security Council', February 2025. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/africa-in-a-new-era-of-insecurity-and-instability-the-2024-review-of-the-peace-and-security-council/>

7 ICRC, 'Humanitarian Outlook 2026: A World Succumbing to War', December 2025. Available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/humanitarian-outlook-2026>

8 ACLED Conflict Index & 2026 Watchlist, December 2025.

9 Abdul & Solomon, 'The Gathering Storm Facing Africa in 2026', January 2026.

10 Reports of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the President of the United Nations Security Council indicate Rwanda's support for the M23. See, for instance,

escalation of fighting against the DRC army and affiliated militias dramatically exacerbated the conflict. 'After opening a new front in South Kivu and capturing the town of Masis in North Kivu province early in (January 2025), the M23 made further advances. The rebel group captured Kalehe on 19 January and Minova on 21 January.'¹¹ Following the expansion of its territorial control in North Kivu since December, the M23 offensive led to the capture of Goma, the strategic capital city of the province, by the end of January. In February, the armed rebel group captured Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu. Continuing its expansion, it seized the town of Walikale, west of Goma in March, although it withdrew later under pressure from the US. The escalation and territorial expansion of the M23 led the armed rebel group to be in control of large swath of territory in eastern DRC.

While the M23 offensive slowed down after March 2025 amid increased peace efforts by the US and Qatar, it resurged again during the third quarter of 2025. From October to December the rebels continued to make advances in both Kivus.¹² In December, the fighting in South Kivu culminated in the M23 taking control of Uvira, a strategic town in proximity of the Burundian capital, Bujumbura.

the latest Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, addressed to the President of the UN Security Council, UN Doc. S/2025/858 (Dec. 2025). Available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/s/2025/858>

¹¹ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Emergency ministerial meeting on the escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC', 27 January 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/emergency-ministerial-meeting-on-the-current-escalation-of-the-conflict-in-eastern-drc/>

¹² Crisis Group, The M23 offensive: Elusive peace in the Great Lakes, Africa Report No. 320, December 2025.



Regions (colored in Orange) seized by the M23

Sudan is the other conflict that experienced major escalation and expansion during 2025. It was in the context of such escalation that the 'frontlines of the fighting and the territorial control of the major parties to the war – the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have substantially shifted.'¹³ In March, the SAF succeeded in pushing out the RSF from the greater Khartoum area, which the latter dominated since 2023. As a result, the territorial concentration of the fighting shifted southward into Kordofan and eastward in Darfur. Seeking to consolidate its control in Darfur, RSF intensified its siege and attacks on North Darfur's capital, El Fasher, through shelling, drone strikes, and ground operations. This brutal campaign succeeded in wresting the city from SAF and its allied armed groups in October 2025.¹⁴ Having defeated the SAF in El Fasher in October – an assault that triggered widespread atrocities,

¹³ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on the Situation in Sudan', 3 August 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-sudan-august4-2025/>

¹⁴ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on the Situation in Sudan', 15 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-sudan-16-december-2025/>

including the reported killing of at least 1,500 civilians and the displacement of tens of thousands – the RSF's campaign into Kordofan, culminating in seizing the 22nd SAF division headquarters in Babanusa, West Kordofan State in early December 2025.¹⁵ Since then and into the first weeks of 2026, Kordofan witnessed the most intense fighting between SAF and RSF with RSF deploying the same methods of war it used to seize El Fasher.

As pointed out in the last annual review, one of the major drivers of the escalation and expansion of conflicts on the continent is the rise and rise of conflicts involving terrorism.¹⁶ Sahel remains the epicentre of much of the intensification in attacks involving terrorist groups. The al-Qaeda-affiliated Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) both intensified its attacks in the Sahel countries and registered signs of expansion beyond the central Sahel countries. The attacks it orchestrated in Burkina Faso in May 2025 claimed the lives of more than 300 people and JNIM's seizure of capitals of two regional provinces, Djibo in the Soum province and Diapaga in the Tapoa province.¹⁷ In a dramatic escalation and show of force and sophistication, JNIM also imposed a blockade in Southern Mali, disrupting access to essential supplies to Bamako.¹⁸ 'The prolonged fuel blockade

¹⁵ As above.

¹⁶ See Amani Africa, *Special Research Report 13, 'The growing threat of terrorism: A product of misdiagnosis and faulty policy response?', May 2022*. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-growing-threat-of-terrorism-in-africa-a-product-of-misdiagnosis-and-faulty-policy-response/>

¹⁷ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on the Sahel Region', 29 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-sahel-region/>

¹⁸ BBC, 'How Jihadists Have Brought a Nation to a Standstill with their Fuel Blockade', 12 November

had precipitated a severe nationwide fuel crisis, forcing the closure of schools and universities while triggering a sharp contraction in economic activity.'¹⁹ In neighbouring Niger, the Tillabéri region—bordering Mali and Burkina Faso—has seen a sharp rise in terrorist attacks during 2025.

Signalling further territorial expansion, the first JNIM claimed attack took place in Nigeria. The Nigerian military confirmed that militants from the Mali-based JNIM killed one soldier during an ambush in western Kwara State, near the border with Benin.²⁰ JNIM also carried out a series of attacks in Mali near the border with Niger and Mauritania, and for the first time on a border post in Senegal.²¹ The spillover and threat of expansion of terrorist attacks from the Sahel into coastal states of West Africa has persisted into and during 2025 with incidents reported in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana and major infiltration and attacks reported in Benin.

South Sudan is the country that experienced the most deterioration²².

2025. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c20e2lnvgpgo>

¹⁹ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on Continental Early Warning and Security Outlook', 15 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-continental-early-warning-and-security-outlook-dec-16-2025/>

²⁰ As above.

²¹ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on the Sahel Region', 29 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-sahel-region/>

²² Amani Africa tells the UNSC to deploy preventive measures with urgency and decisiveness to pull South Sudan from the brink, Amani Africa (11 November 2025) available on <https://amaniafrica-et.org/amani-africa-tells-the-unscto-deploy-preventive-measures-with-urgency-and-decisiveness-to-pull-south-sudan-from-the-brink/>

Political tensions mounted exponentially. Some senior members of the Revitalised-Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) were detained and/or otherwise purged from their positions, thereby leading to violation of the power-sharing deals of the R-ARCSS. Following the attack on a South Sudan Defence Forces unit in Nasir in March 2024, the fighting that ensued has escalated and expanded. As 2025 ended and 2026 commenced, the deterioration of the security situation reached a threshold that leaves no doubt that South Sudan relapsed back to full scale conflict.²³

Similar trends were reported in the Lake Chad basin. As documented for the PSC session on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) held on 15 December 2025, the year under review 'has been marked by an intensifying pattern of insurgent attacks'²⁴ According to one analysis, militant Islamist-related fatalities in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region rose 7 per cent over the past year to 3,982, representing 18 per cent of the continental total, while civilian targeting increased by 32 per cent to 880, the highest since 2016.²⁵ Nigeria recorded an 18 per cent rise in fatalities, with Borno state alone accounting for 74 per cent of regional deaths; Cameroon registered

467 deaths with a 45 per cent decline, whereas Chad more than doubled to 242.²⁶ Meanwhile, insurgent infighting has also resurged. From 5 to 8 November 2025, JAS attacked ISWAP across Lake Chad islands and river routes for control of extortion revenues, arms and fuel smuggling corridors through Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.²⁷

2.1.2 Heightening of the human cost and humanitarian consequences

A combination of factors including escalation of conflicts, the weaponisation of humanitarian access including food, shrinking humanitarian space and the recession of humanitarian funding continue to heighten the human cost and humanitarian consequences of insecurity in almost all of the conflict situations including, Sudan, DRC, South Sudan and the Sahel.

The humanitarian situation in Sudan and Eastern DRC as well as South Sudan stands out due to the gravity of the escalation and intensification of the conflicts there. As a recent analysis put it, 'Sudan is now the epicenter of one of the world's deadliest conflicts and most desperate humanitarian crises.'²⁸ The worsening conflict situation and lack of humanitarian access brought Sudan the unfortunate status of being 'the world's largest hunger, protection and displacement crisis.'²⁹ In Darfur, RSF's

23 Amani Africa Insight on the situation in Sudan, 18 January 2026, available on <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-south-sudan-jan-23-2026/>

24 Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Consideration of the report of the Commission on the MNJTF mandate', 14 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/consideration-of-the-report-of-the-commission-on-the-mnjtf-mandate/>

25 Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 'Africa surpasses 150,00 deaths linked to militant Islamist groups in past decade', 28 July 2025. Available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/en-2025-mig-10-year/>

26 As above.

27 As above.

28 Said Djinnit & El-Ghassim Wane, Amani Africa Policy Brief, 'Sudan's crisis is Africa's crisis and its responsibility', January 2026, p.1. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/sudans-crisis-is-africas-crisis-and-its-responsibility/>

29 Save the Children, IPC alert: '22 INGOs raise concern about deepening starvation in Sudan', 2 February 2026. Available at: <https://www.>

500-day siege on El Fasher, the last city in Darfur that was remaining outside of RSF's hands, that exacerbated the dire humanitarian situation in North Darfur including the famine condition, was followed by the killing of thousands of civilians. This led to the displacement of over 107,000 people from El Fasher and surrounding areas between late October and early December.³⁰ In addition to leading to being the largest child displacement crisis and forcing more than 30 million people in to being in need of humanitarian assistance, the intensification of the war in Sudan precipitated 'the world's worst famine.'³¹ The UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification reported that levels of acute malnutrition have surpassed famine thresholds in two other areas in North Darfur, Um Baru and Kernoj,³² This means that Sudan possesses a new humanitarian record of having 'the most areas of active famine on the planet.'³³

savethechildren.net/sudan/news/IPC-alert-22-ingos-raise-concerns-about-deepening-starvation-sudan

30 UN News, 'UN warns Sudan war entering deadlier phase as fighting spreads in Kordofan', *Global perspective Human stories*, 22 December 2025. Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166655>

31 Action Against Hunger, *Sudan becomes the world's hungriest country as famine spreads to two new areas of Darfur*, 5 February 2026. Available at: <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/press-releases/sudan-becomes-the-worlds-hungriest-country-as-famine-spreads-to-two-new-areas-of-darfur/>

32 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 'Sudan: Famine Threshold for Acute Malnutrition Surpassed in Two More North Darfur Localities, Crisis Worsening in Greater Kordofan'. Available at: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/countries-in-focus-archive/issue-143/en/>

33 Action Against Hunger, *Sudan becomes the world's hungriest country as famine spreads to two new areas of Darfur*, 5 February 2026. Available

Compounding the dire humanitarian situation in Sudan is the fact that the 2026 humanitarian response plan received only 5.5% of the \$2.2 billion needed and Sudan suffers from heavily constrained humanitarian access.

Since January 2025, the humanitarian situation in eastern DRC witnessed marked deterioration amid the escalation of the conflict between the M23 and the DRC army and affiliated militias. During the year, the **intensified conflict has led to over 2.1 million new displacements**, including nearly 1 million children, making it one of the largest surges in humanitarian needs. The eastern provinces host 5.71 million displaced persons. Similar to Sudan, the escalation of fighting has also exacerbated already dire food insecurity induced by protracted violence, repeated displacement and disruption of food production and humanitarian access. The UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification IPC determined that the number of people projected to face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) by early 2026 increased by 1.8 million and those in emergency levels of hunger (IPC Phase 4) by 700,000.³⁴

In the Sahel, South Sudan, Somalia and Mozambique as well, the escalating security situation has further worsened

at, <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/press-releases/sudan-becomes-the-worlds-hungriest-country-as-famine-spreads-to-two-new-areas-of-darfur/>

34 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - December 2025 and Projection for January - June 2026'. Available at: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1159775/>

the humanitarian and human rights crisis, with civilians bearing the brunt of increasing violence and instability. As in Sudan and the DRC, numerous reports have documented human rights abuses and crimes committed by various actors, often with impunity.

2.1.3 Persistence of inter-state tensions

In the Great Lakes region, a major aspect of the escalation and expansion of the conflict in eastern DRC is the persisting tension and entrenching animosity between Kinshasa and Kigali. It is also one of the factors that accounts for the abandonment of the AU mandated Luanda process. Despite peace talks and the peace deals the two sides signed, the antagonism between them persisted during the year and even subsequent to the signing of the deal signed in Washington DC, with both of them trading accusations. This was in full display in the statements that officials of the two countries made during the 80th UN General Assembly in September 2025 and in the various sessions that the UN Security Council and the PSC held on the situation in eastern DRC.

Apart from exacerbating tensions between Kigali and Kinshasa, the escalation of conflict in eastern DRC following the M23 offensive fuelled tension between Rwanda and Burundi. Kigali accused Burundian armed forces for its role in systematic bombardment of civilian villages near the Rwandan border. On its part, Burundi implicated Kigali for attacks on the Cibitoke province.³⁵ Apart

³⁵ The AU Commission Chairperson in a statement of 10 December 2025 expressed deep concern over 'the evolving situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular the developments in South Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, as well in Cibitoke Province, Burundi.' See Press

from heightening trading of accusations between Kigali and Kinshasa, the M23 offensive also heightened the risk of direct hostilities between Rwanda and Burundi, following the skirmishes on Burundi's territory. During the UN Security Council briefing on eastern DRC on 12 December, the representative of Burundi expressed concern over cross-border attacks, some of which he said violated Burundi's sovereignty.³⁶ He further described the 4 December attacks in Cibitoke as 'a grave provocation,' warning that if such attacks were to continue, 'it would become difficult to avoid direct escalation between the two countries [Burundi and Rwanda].'³⁷

In the Horn of Africa, fears of inter-state conflict pitting Eritrea against Ethiopia ratcheted up during 2025. This came amid rising war of words between Addis Ababa and Asmara as government officials in Ethiopia made public Ethiopia's claim over the port of Assab that it lost to Eritrea in early 1990s and Eritrea is accused of propping up armed rebel groups in Ethiopia. Troop mobilisation on both sides of the common border was reported. Both have also intensified military build-up. Signifying further escalation of tension during 2026, in a letter that Ethiopia's Foreign Minister wrote to his Eritrean counterpart in early February 2026, demanding the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Ethiopian territories, accused Eritrea of supplying arms to rebel groups

Release by the Chairperson of the AU Commission on 11 December 2025. Available at: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20251211/auc-chairperson-urges-restraint-amid-escalating-tensions-great-lakes-region>

³⁶ United Nations, Coverage of UN Security Council's 10063rd Meeting, 12 December 2025. Available at: <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16244.doc.htm>

³⁷ As above.

in Ethiopia.³⁸

As neighbouring countries get sucked deeper into the war in Sudan, existing tensions and rivalry over the Nile and Ethiopia's push for access to the Red Sea have heated up further tensions. It is in this context and amid the growing face-off between Saudi Arabia and UAE in the region that the entanglement in Sudan's expanding war of its neighbours marked notable change. While Addis Ababa displayed a neutral stance in the previous two years following the outbreak of the war in Sudan, in 2025 reports emerged that territories in Ethiopia are being used as route for supplying support for the RSF.³⁹ Egypt's posture also reportedly changed from political and technical collaboration with the SAF to using its territory for undertaking drone attacks against RSF targets,⁴⁰ particularly in the aftermath of the fall of El Fasher in Darfur into the hands of the RSF.

In West Africa, tension between Sahel military governments and neighbouring countries in the region has continued to inhibit regional cohesion and to fuel insecurity. The tension between Benin and Niger that emerged in the aftermath of the coup in Niger in 2023 continued into 2025. Cotonou recalled its ambassador in February 2025. Benin's relations with its Sahelian neighbours strained further

amid rising incidents of terrorist activities in the border areas of Benin and following the foiled coup attempt in December 2025. Benin's fallout with Niger further deepened when Cotonou expelled two Nigerian diplomats accusing them of spying at the beginning of the year. Niger responded by declaring the *Chargé d'affaires* of Benin's embassy persona non grata.⁴¹ Burkina Faso's relations with Cote d'Ivoire continued to deteriorate during the year. In August, Burkina Faso detained six Ivorian officials on the border, accusing them of espionage. During a press conference in October, marking three years in office, Burkina Faso's military leader accused Cote d'Ivoire of supporting groups seeking to destabilise his country.⁴² Amid persisting mistrust in West Africa, the landing in December 2025 of an unauthorised Nigerian military plane in Burkina Faso for which Sahelian states accused Nigeria of breaching Burkinabe airspace triggered diplomatic tension between Abuja and Ouagadougou. Following the landing, Burkina Faso authorities detained the pilots and the military personnel on board the plane. It was only after Abuja sent its Minister of Foreign Affairs to Burkina Faso and expressed regret over 'irregularities in the documentation, particularly regarding overflight permits for Burkina Faso,' the situation was resolved.⁴³ Despite

38 Reuters, 'Ethiopia accuses Eritrea of military aggression, backing armed groups', 8 February 2026. Available at: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/ethiopia-accuses-eritrea-of-military-aggression-backing-armed-groups/ar-AAIVVp58>

39 Africa report, 'Is Ethiopia's Abiy helping RSF in Sudan's civil war?' 6 February 2025. Available at: <https://www.theafricareport.com/407980/is-ethiopias-abiy-helping-rsf-in-sudans-civil-war/>

40 Reuters, 'Egypt's drone deployment to border raises stakes in Sudan's civil war', 2 February 2026. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3MERHLq>

41 African Security Analysis, 'Benin-Niger tensions deepen after intelligence arrests', 24 January 2026. Available at: <https://www.africansecurityanalysis.com/reports/benin-niger-tensions-deepen-after-intelligence-arrests>

42 Africa Report, 'Burkina Faso's Traoré accuses Cote d'Ivoire of sheltering enemies', 1 October 2025. Available at: <https://www.theafricareport.com/393832/burkina-fasos-traore-accuses-cote-divoire-of-sheltering-enemies/>

43 Africa Report, 'Nigeria apologises to Ibrahim Traoré following the C-130 military landing incident', 18 December 2025. Available at: <https://www.africansecurityanalysis.com/reports/nigeria-apologises-to-ibrahim-traore-following-c-130-military-landing-incident>

the outreach to Sahel countries by the Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Authority, Sierra Leon's President Bio, these regional tensions both deepen mistrust and get in the way of possible rapprochement between ECOWAS and Alliance of Sahel States (AES).

2.1.4 State fragmentation and entrenchment of non-state armed groups

One of the major developments that accompanied the escalation of conflict in Sudan in 2025 was the de facto division of Sudan into two. Following the loss it suffered after SAF succeeded in seizing Sudan's capital, the success of RSF's military campaign on entrenching its control in Darfur by seizing El Fasher and expanding to Kordofan cemented the division. This territorial bifurcation assumed an overtly institutional character in May, when both parties announced parallel governing structures in areas under their respective control. SAF leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan appointed Kamil Idris as Prime Minister and formed a technocratic government in Port Sudan. In response, the RSF-aligned Tasis coalition declared a rival administration from Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, naming Mohamed Hassan al-Taishi as Prime Minister, RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo as head of a Presidential Council, and SPLM-N leader Abdel Aziz al-Hilu as his deputy. As a development that is reminiscent of the situation in Libya, RSF's establishment of a rival government was greeted with wide rejection and condemnation as a grave threat to the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan.

In the Sahel as well, despite continuing
theafricareport.com/402970/nigeria-apologises-to-ibrahim-traore-following-c-130-military-landing-incident/

efforts of the military regimes in the Sahel, what the former AU Commission Chairperson called the ravaging of some of our countries is not abating.⁴⁴ If anything as the blockade by JNIM of parts of Mali that disrupted supply of fuel to Bamako during the year highlighted, the fragmentation of countries in the Sahel intensified. The military government in Burkina Faso does not control more than 40 percent of the country. Further aggravating this trend, the terrorist groups started the implementation of parallel governance practices taxing populations, providing Islamic adjudication of local disputes and running check points controlling population movements as well as running war economies.

Aggravating the trend observed in the previous year, in 2025, '[n]ot only did the M23 expand its territorial control, but it also went on to institutionalise its control through the establishment of its own administrative structures in the territories under its control.'⁴⁵ As a recent report put it, the M23 established its own system of governance in the territories under its control 'to impose its authority and exploit natural resources.'⁴⁶ As in Sudan and the

44 Speech of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Thirty Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, 17 February 2024. Available at: <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240217/speech-he-moussa-faki-mahamat-chairperson-african-union-commission-thirty>

45 Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Briefing on the situation in eastern DRC', 27 November 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-eastern-drc/>

46 Crisis Group, 'The M23 offensive: Elusive peace in the Great Lakes', Africa Report No. 320, 19 December 2025. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/rpt/africa/democratic-republic-congo-rwanda/320-m23-offensive-elusive-peace-great-lakes>

Sahel, these parallel state institutions threaten to aggravate the fragility and existing patterns of fragmentation of the DRC, endangering the territorial and constitutional integrity of the country.

The threat of state fragmentation became particularly acute in Somalia following the unilateral recognition of Somaliland—a self-declared breakaway region—in December 2025. While long-standing tensions over Somaliland's status had resurfaced in early 2024 after Ethiopia and Somaliland signed a memorandum of understanding on sea access, these tensions had temporarily subsided following the Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia in December 2024. However, Israel's recognition of Somaliland in December 2025 spiked the political, security and geopolitical temperature in the region, placing Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity at serious risk. Beyond its domestic implications, this development carries the potential to destabilize the wider Horn of Africa as it came at a time of major geopolitical rivalry and rising tension along the coast of the Red Sea and Gulf of Eden.⁴⁷

In all the conflict situations, including notably Sudan, Sahel and Eastern DRC, the emergence of a war economy involving the illegal mining of minerals, cross border trafficking in arms and illicit goods, and taxation of local economic activities constitute a major factor behind the increasing entrenchment of armed rebel groups and insurgents. In the Sahel, JNIM and the Islamic State in the Sahel have expanded their operations from

opportunistic activities to well organised structures including involvement in and extortion of artisanal gold mining particularly in Mali and Burkina Faso through taxation and fees for protection.⁴⁸ Similarly in eastern DRC, armed groups including the M23 finance themselves through the smuggling of coltan, gold, tin and tungsten. For the M23, the establishment of its own administration in areas under its control is in part a way of 'regularising' its utilisation of resources in eastern DRC for financing its operations.⁴⁹ In Sudan, gold mining is central in serving as source of financing for the RSF and SAF and for sustaining UAE's support for the RSF.⁵⁰

48 See, for instance, *The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime*, 'Illicit Hub Mapping in West Africa 2025'. Available at: <https://page.globalinitiative.net/west-africa-illicit-hub-mapping-media-kit/>

49 In September 2024, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO, Bintou Keita, briefed the UN Security Council on the situation in eastern DRC. She reported that M23's consolidation of administrative control over Masisi and Rutshuru territories in North Kivu had enabled the group to establish control over coltan production. According to her briefing, trade from the Rubaya area—estimated to supply more than 15 per cent of global tantalum production—was generating approximately USD 300,000 per month for the armed group. She further warned that the systematic smuggling and criminal laundering of the DRC's natural resources were strengthening armed groups, undermining state authority, and eroding ongoing peace and stabilisation efforts. Subsequent [reporting](#) indicates that M23 has further expanded and consolidated its territorial control, with estimates suggesting that it now controls nearly half of South Kivu's cassiterite and coltan production and over two-thirds of its wolframite output.

50 Ahmed Soliman & Suliman Baldo, Chatham House Research Paper, 'Gold and the War in Sudan', March 2025. Available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/03/gold-and-war->

47 Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Emergency session on Israel's recognition of Somaliland', 6 January 2026. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/emergency-session-on-israels-recognition-of-somaliland/>

2.1.5 Geopolitical rivalry determining the course of conflicts, amid intensification of external interventions

While external intervention has been a major factor shaping conflict and political dynamics in many parts of the continent in recent years, in 2025 **the influence of external intervention has come to outweigh the role of conflict parties.** In some instances, the war morphed out of the control of the immediate conflict parties. This shift became prominent in the Horn of Africa where the geopolitical rivalry involving middle eastern powers increased in ferocity and scale, particularly in the context of the eruption of the geopolitical confrontation between the Saudi Arabia and UAE during 2025.

As the Saudi face off the UAE⁵¹ including in the context of the war in Sudan, it intensified the ferocity and scale of external intervention, which became the most significant development that changed the course of the war during the year. On the one hand, in enabling enhanced supply of arms and support for the SAF, this development facilitated the consolidation of the success that SAF registered particularly in wresting Khartoum and other territories in the north and east and boosting the regional and international diplomatic visibility of the SAF led de jure authorities of Sudan. On the other hand, it also fuelled RSF's military campaign for asserting dominance and control in its areas of major influence and the steps it took to projecting itself as a rival government of Sudan. In so doing, the intensified external intervention not only shapes the

[sudan/03-gold-production-and-trade-during-war](#)

51 New York Times, 'Gloves come off in Gulf as Trump's closest Arab allies clash', 4 February 2026. Available at : <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/04/world/middleeast/emirates-saudi-arabia-rift.html>

dynamics of the conflict but also escalated the war in Sudan into one whose outcome would be determined outside of Sudan and more by non-Sudanese actors. It was thus pointed out that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's request for US President Donald Trump's support on the crisis in Sudan is a further signifier that battlefield dynamics and the direction of diplomatic search for ending the war 'runs even more directly through the escalating rivalry between Saudi Arabia and the UAE.'⁵²

The recognition of Somaliland hastened the geopolitical friction in the Horn of Africa. On the one hand, Israel, with UAE in the back, has taken steps to institutionalise its recognition of Somaliland by sending senior official visits to Hargeisa. Determined to fight against the influence Israel advances through institutionalising its ties with Hargeisa, Türkiye, Egypt and Saudi Arabia launched a regional alliance aimed at both supporting Somalia in its effort to tighten sovereign control over Somaliland. This alliance played a role in the termination of security and infrastructure partnership between Somalia and the UAE.

While it does not manifest itself in the same way, global geopolitical rivalry is changing the geopolitics of the conflict in eastern DRC. This is principally owing to the growing race for control of critical minerals and critical mineral supply chains in which the DRC occupies a pivotal place on how this race plays itself out. It is within this change in the geopolitics of the war in eastern DRC that the US got Kinshasa and Kigali into negotiating a deal in

52 Responsible State Craft, 'Saudi leans in hard to get UAE out of Sudan civil war', 25 November 2025. Available at: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/uae-sudan-war/>

record time and signing it at the level of the presidents of the two countries in Washington DC in early December 2025.

The launch by the US military of an attack targeting Sokoto in Nigeria signified a major shift in the role between national authorities and major powers. Instead of provision of support, this action signified a move for a direct involvement in the fight against terrorist groups in the region.

The foregoing clearly shows that the continent lacks the requisite common instruments and mechanisms fit for the current geopolitical dynamics shaping external intervention for moderating and negotiating the engagement and role of external actors. The resultant cracks demand that the AU develops and rolls out strategy on managing relations and engagement of external actors on peace and security on the continent building on relevant AU normative and policy instruments. Of particular significance in this respect is the development of such a strategy on the relationship with countries in the middle east and the gulf.

2.1.6 New weapons of choice and the transformation of conflicts in Africa

Drones have risen to prominence as a choice of weapon and are changing the battle field dynamics and how wars are fought on the continent. A major aspect of this change, as rightly noted in a recent analysis, is the fact that the 'advent of comparatively cheap but technologically advanced combat drones has given entities that previously lacked significant air power the capacity to carry out precision airstrikes.'⁵³ The impact of

⁵³ Gerrit Kurtz, Wolfram Lacher, and Denis M. Tull, SWP Mega Trends Afrika Policy brief 33, 'The myth of the gamechanger: drones and military power in Africa, 2025, p. 1.

the increasing use of combat drones in particular was notable during the year in the major conflict situations including the Sahel, Lake Chad basin, eastern DRC and Sudan.

In the Sahel, the use of drones shows major shift in its use by terrorist groups particularly JNIM from surveillance to orchestrating targeted attacks. As one recent report that documented this trend in the Sahel put it, 'JNIM has conducted repeated drone-enabled attacks across Mali, Burkina Faso, and Togo in 2025, often coordinating drone use with ground assaults.'⁵⁴ Concerning the evolution of the use of drones, it noted that '[e]arly indicators of JNIM's drone evolution, from improvised release systems in Tessalit (April 2024) to FPV-modified drones dropping improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Djibo (February 2025), suggest sustained experimentation and technical refinement.'⁵⁵

In Lake Chad as well, the escalation of violence registered during 2025 was 'accompanied by notable tactical advancements; ISWAP reportedly overrun 15 Nigerian military bases, introduced night vision and deployed armed and surveillance drones.'⁵⁶ It is further documented that '[s]ince June, JAS has attacked positions at Baga, Goldavi near Talakatchi, and Kirawa, with night assaults aided by night vision and modified commercial drones, and with reports

⁵⁴ Niccola Milnes & Rida Lyammouri, Policy Centre for the New South Policy Paper 24/25, 'Countering JNIM's drone proliferation in the Sahel', July 2025.

⁵⁵ As above, p.5.

⁵⁶ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Consideration of the report of the Commission on the MNJTF mandate', 14 December 2025. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/consideration-of-the-report-of-the-commission-on-the-mnjtf-mandate/>

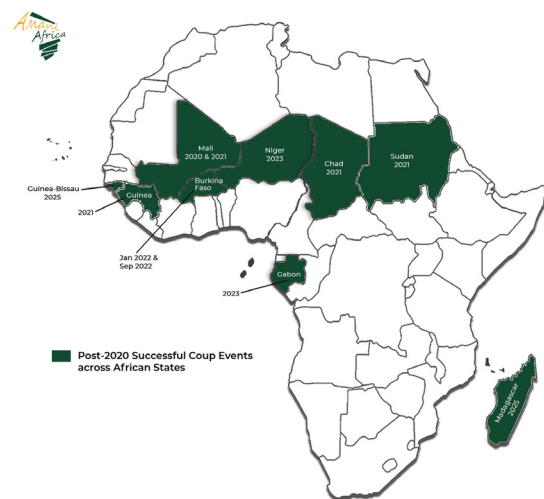
citing rocket-propelled grenades, armed drones and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁵⁷

In Sudan, drone warfare has come to play an increasingly important role in the conflict. While drones contributed to SAF's success in wresting territories from RSF including Khartoum, a recent Al Jazeera report showed that the deployment of combat drones by the RSF became prominent during 2025.⁵⁸ Signifying the acquisition of long range combat drones, the RSF launched coordinated drone attack against Port Sudan in early May. This attack also targeted Osman Digna air base in Kassala. While much of the civilian casualties from the use of combat drones is attributed to SAF during 2024 and 2025, the deadly consequences of RSF's use of combat drones in its military campaign in central Sudan for civilians emerged with 'a triple drone strike in Kalogi, South Kordofan, killing more than 114 people.'⁵⁹

2.1.7. No light at the end of the constitutional governance and democratic regression tunnel

The continent witnessed fourteen elections, several of which renewed and deepened concerns about democratic backsliding in Africa.⁶⁰ Elections in

Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and Tanzania, in particular, raised serious questions regarding electoral credibility, prolonged incumbency, contested results, and election-related violence. In Guinea-Bissau, the electoral process itself was violently interrupted by military intervention, culminating in a seizure of power in November.



Post-2020 Successful Coup Events across African States

Tanzania's election was especially striking, as it unfolded with a level of violence and repression that many observers had not anticipated. The general elections held on 29 October 2025 produced an overwhelmingly one-sided outcome, with President Samia Suluhu Hassan declared the winner with over 98% of the vote. The process, however, was deeply controversial and marred by widespread unrest and allegations of severe democratic deficits. The preliminary report of the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) concluded that the elections 'did not comply with AU principles, normative frameworks, and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections.'⁶¹ The

⁵⁷ As above.

⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, 'The drones being used in Sudan: 1000 attacks since April 2023', 3 February 2026. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2026/2/3/drone-warfare-in-sudan-tracking-1000-aerial-attacks-since-april-2023>

⁵⁹ As above.

⁶⁰ Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Consideration of the half-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa', 25 January 2026. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/consideration-of-the-half-year-report-of-the-chairperson-of-the-au-commission-on-elections-in-africa/>

⁶¹ See the preliminary statement of the African Union Election Observation Mission to the October 2025 general elections in the United Republic of

Mission cited a severely restricted political environment, opposition boycotts and exclusions, internet shutdowns, outbreaks of deadly protests, and significant procedural irregularities that undermined electoral integrity and the peaceful acceptance of results.

Cameroon's presidential election similarly attracted concern. The decision of President Paul Biya—now in his nineties—to seek an eighth term underscored the issue of prolonged incumbency. The election, held on 12 October 2025, took place amid heightened political tensions and was followed by protests in several parts of the country. Security forces intervened to restore order, resulting in reported casualties. Although the Constitutional Council confirmed Biya's victory with 53.7% of the vote, the result was rejected by opposition candidate Issa Tchiroma Bakary, who claimed victory and accused the authorities of systematic manipulation.

In Côte d'Ivoire, incumbent President Alassane Ouattara secured a fourth term with 89.8% of the vote. The AUEOM's preliminary report highlighted a range of concerns, including candidate exclusions, weak opposition participation, accessibility challenges, and logistical shortcomings that adversely affected the overall credibility of the electoral process.⁶²

After a one-year hiatus, the resurgence of military coups that began in 2020 continued in 2025. The year recorded two Tanzania, 5 November 2025. Available at: <https://peaceau.org/uploads/preliminary-statement-african-union-elections-observation-mission-to-the-tanzania-2025-general-elections.pdf>

62 See the joint ECOWAS-AU Preliminary Declaration – Cote D'Ivoire Presidential Election, 27 October 2025. Available at: <https://peaceau.org/uploads/preliminary-declaration-rci.pdf>

successful military seizures of power—in Madagascar (October) and Guinea-Bissau (November)—as well as one unsuccessful attempt in Benin (December). Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau were added to the list of AU member states sanctioned for unconstitutional changes of government. In October, following weeks of Gen-Z led mass protest demanding improvement of social and economic conditions, the army in Madagascar removed the incumbent president and took over power. It was reported the unrest was initially triggered by widespread frustration over chronic power and water outages, compounded by rising living costs, unemployment, and public disillusionment with governance. What began as localised, youth-led (Gen Z) protests in late September quickly evolved into a nationwide movement calling for greater accountability and political reform.⁶³ However the situation changed dramatically when members of the elite CAPSAT unit, the same corps implicated in previous coups, marched alongside demonstrators in Antananarivo and subsequently declared its seizure of power in mid-October 2025.⁶⁴

The general elections scheduled for 23 November 2025, intended to produce legitimate presidential and legislative outcomes in a country long plagued by political instability, were abruptly derailed by a military takeover on 26 November—one day before provisional results were due to be announced. The

63 Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Emergency session on the political unrest in Madagascar', 13 October 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/emergency-session-on-the-political-unrest-in-madagascar/>

64 Amani Africa Insights on the PSC, 'Session on the situation in Madagascar', 15 October 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/session-on-the-situation-in-madagascar/>

military intervened apparently in close coordination and possibly even at the behest of Guinea-Bissau's incumbent president, Umaro Sissoco Embaló. It was Embaló himself who actually informed news outlets about his own overthrow. It was only after such announcement that on 26 November, a group of army officers declared their seizure of power and suspension of all political institutions. Declaring the establishment of the High Military Command for the Restoration of National Security and Public Order (HMC) as the governing body, it imposed an overnight curfew and halted the electoral process.⁶⁵

In Benin, in the early hours of 7 December a group of soldiers initiated a coup in Cotonou. After seizing the national broadcaster, they announced the dissolution of state institutions, the suspension of the constitution and the creation of the Comité Militaire pour la Refondation, led by Lt-Col Pascal Tigri. However, due to lack of support from all elements of the military and following the intervention from ECOWAS member states, most notably Nigerian President Bola Tinubu's dispatching of the country's air force to strike positions held by coup makers, the attempted coup was successfully foiled by the end of the day.

This continuation in 2025 of the resurgence of coups that started in 2020 is a result of two major factors. The first of this is the continuing crisis of constitutional and democratic governance on the continent. The second relates to the

failure of the AU to enforce Article 25(4) of the African Charter on Governance, Democracy and Elections (ACDEG). The logic of Article 25(4) is clear: even if a coup succeeds, there should be no pathway to 'auto-legitimisation' through electoral processes.⁶⁶ This provision was accordingly meant to remove the principal incentive that historically made coups an avenue for ascent to power for aspiring members of militaries on the continent.

In the context of its response to the renewed surge in coups, despite its declared zero-tolerance policy toward unconstitutional changes of government, AU's enforcement of the critical provision of Article 24(5) has been selective and inconsistent. As a recent analysis pointed out, this has fostered 'a tendency of laxity in enforcing (and observing) ACDEG's Article 25(4) norm.'⁶⁷ From Chad, to Gabon and Guinea, those who perpetrated coups did not face the consequences of Article 25(4) of ACDEG and were successful in translating the success in staging the coup into electoral victory.⁶⁸ In failing to

66 Solomon Dersso and Biruk Shewadeg, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 'Coups d'état continues to surge as the African Union and regional bodies inadvertently make coup-making profitable again', 24 December 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/coup-detat-continues-to-surge-as-the-african-union-and-regional-bodies-inadvertently-make-coup-making-profitable-again/>

67 Solomon Dersso, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 'Can AU's anti-coup norm survive a scenario in which the military leaders of all suspended countries run for elections following the precedent in Chad and Gabon', 10 April 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/can-aus-anti-coup-norm-survive-a-scenario-in-which-the-military-leaders-of-all-suspended-countries-run-for-elections-following-the-precedent-in-chad-and-gabon/>

68 See for instance, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 'A moment of reckoning for the AU in Chad as interim leader declares candidacy for

65 Solomon Dersso, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba*, 'Guinea-Bissau, not Benin, the real test of the efficacy of ECOWAS's response to coups', 31 December 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/guinea-bissau-not-benin-the-real-test-of-the-efficacy-of-ecowass-response-to-coups/>

enforce this provision, the AU and regional bodies ended up removing the costs of staging coups, thereby making military takeover of power profitable once again.⁶⁹

2.2 The unravelling of multilateral orders

2.2.1. The AU floating adrift?

The year 2025 has starkly exposed the AU's diminishing agency in addressing conflicts across the continent. From Sudan and the DRC to Libya and the Sahel, the AU has increasingly found itself marginal to diplomatic processes shaping outcomes in Africa's most severe crises. Peace initiatives are now largely driven by external actors, while the AU's role has often been reduced to endorsing or welcoming externally led efforts rather than shaping them.

In Sudan, despite the AU's early and proactive engagement following the outbreak of conflict in April 2023, its mediation efforts have yielded limited results. The AU deployed a range of diplomatic instruments, including the

presidential election', 9 April 2024. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/a-moment-of-reckoning-for-the-au-in-chad-as-interim-leader-declares-candidacy-for-presidential-election/>; Solomon Dersso, Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, 'Can AU's anti-coup norm survive a scenario in which the military leaders of all suspended countries run for elections following the precedent in Chad and Gabon', 10 April 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/can-aus-anti-coup-norm-survive-a-scenario-in-which-the-military-leaders-of-all-suspended-countries-run-for-elections-following-the-precedent-in-chad-and-gabon/>

⁶⁹ Solomon Dersso and Biruk Shewadeg, 'Coups d'état continues to surge as the African Union and regional bodies inadvertently make coup-making profitable again', 24 December 2025.

expanded mechanism for coordinating peace initiatives, the establishment of a High-Level Panel to facilitate political dialogue, the creation of a PSC Presidential Committee mandated to facilitate direct mediation between the leadership of the SAF and the RSF, and most recently, engagement through the Quintet. Yet none of these initiatives has produced a meaningful breakthrough. The AU-facilitated political dialogue lost momentum after three rounds, while the PSC Presidential Committee failed to convene even its inaugural meeting. Although the PSC has repeatedly reaffirmed the AU's central role in peace-making, the organization has been unable to assert this role effectively. In practice, the diplomatic space has been dominated by the Quad—comprising the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates—which has taken the lead, particularly in ceasefire efforts intended to pave the way toward a comprehensive settlement.

A similar pattern is evident in the DRC. While the AU previously played a meaningful role through the Nairobi and Luanda mediation tracks addressing the long-running crisis in eastern DRC, its influence has recently been eclipsed. The United States brokered direct mediation between the DRC and Rwanda, culminating in the Washington Accord signed in December 2025, while Qatar facilitated the Doha Framework aimed at achieving a comprehensive peace agreement between the DRC and the AFC/M23. In both instances, the AU was largely absent from the core negotiations.

In South Sudan, where tensions since the March 2025 confrontation between President Salva Kiir's government and the White Army—allegedly linked to SPLM-

IO—have raised fears of a renewed civil war, the AU has likewise struggled to change the country's dangerous trajectory. The AU deployed a range of diplomatic tools, including a visit by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the engagement of the Panel of the Wise, the activation of the AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5), and a field mission by the PSC. Despite these efforts, no tangible progress has been achieved. Notably, unlike Sudan or the DRC, South Sudan is a context in which external actors have been relatively less involved in peacemaking, offering the AU greater diplomatic space. Yet the situation has continued to deteriorate under the AU's watch.

Several factors account for this erosion of agency, some of which lie beyond the AU's direct control. In Sudan, for instance, even the sustained involvement of powerful external actors with significant leverage has failed to deliver a breakthrough, underscoring the structural complexity of the conflict. External sponsorship of rival parties has further entrenched the war, while the absence of ripeness for mediation—given each side's belief in a possible military victory—has constrained diplomatic efforts. Nonetheless, these realities do not fully absolve the AU. Structural and operational limitations persist, including the difficulty of mounting credible peace initiatives backed by sufficient political leverage over the parties to the conflict.⁷⁰

At a moment marked by intensifying great-power rivalry, growing geopolitical fragmentation, the resurgence of unilateralism, and a weakened multilateral system under strain—particularly the UN and international law—the AU's capacity to lead on African peace and security has never been more critical. While ongoing efforts to recalibrate the African Peace and Security Architecture, including its current review process, are encouraging, the years ahead will not allow a business-as-usual approach. Without decisive reinvigoration, the AU risks further erosion of its relevance—and ultimately its *raison d'être*—as a central actor in shaping credible solutions to Africa's conflicts, both in the eyes of Africans and external partners alike.⁷¹

2.2.2 Acceleration and entrenchment of the unraveling of African regional multilateral orders

A further manifestation of the entrenchment of the new era of instability and conflicts is the deepening of the fragmentation of regional orders that was underway during 2024. More than other regions of Africa, West Africa and the Sahel experienced this phenomenon in more profoundly than other parts of the continent. Following the collapse of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), a subregional arrangement initially composed of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the region witnessed the fracture of the ECOWAS. While it did not lead to the

⁷⁰ For more, see Amani Africa, *Special Research Report, 'Re-energizing conflict prevention and resolution in Africa: a quest to salvage the APSA'*, September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/Re-energising-Conflict-Prevention-and-Resolution-in-Africa-a-Quest-to-Salvage-the-APSA.pdf>

⁷¹ See also Solomon Dersso and Tefesehet Hailu, *Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, 'African Union risks betraying the *raison d'être* of its existence, bequeathing a fragmented continent burdened with conflicts'*, 15 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/african-union-risks-betraying-the-raison-detre-of-its-existence-bequeathing-a-fragmented-continent-burdened-with-conflicts/>

complete rapture of the arrangements under ECOWAS, the withdrawal of the AES states from ECOWAS took effect on 28 January 2025 completing the end of the membership of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from the sub-regional organisation that for a long time was seen as a leading model of regional integration on the continent. Despite the announcement of the three countries for visa free entry and residency for ECOWAS citizens and the announcement of the ECOWAS Commission extending recognition of ECOWAS-branded identity documents from citizens of the three countries, trade benefits under ETLS, visa-free movement and residency rights, the withdrawal that came into effect on 29 January 2025 deals the most serious and unprecedented blow to the regional integration agenda both at the regional and continental levels.

In the Horn of Africa, the strain from the tension between states continued to weigh adversely both on the regional role and the cohesion of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Apart from further eroding the role of the regional body in dealing with the escalation and expansion of conflicts in the region that was undermined in recent years as highlighted in Sudan's suspension of its participation in the regional body previously, in 2025 the regional body witnessed further signs of fracture with the announcement by Eritrea of its withdrawal from IGAD on 12 December.⁷² Eritrea charged the regional body of failing to live up to its legal mandate and authority. Referring to

the earlier suspension of its membership before restoring it in 2023, Eritrea stated that its suspension from IGAD in 2007 was in protest of what it called its 'deleterious role becoming a tool against targeted member states' and in ending the suspension of its membership in 2023 it hoped that the organisation 'would rectify its past records.'

Similarly, in the Central Africa region, the conflict in eastern DRC affected the regional body, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). It led to the withdrawal of Rwanda from the regional body. According to the statement announcing the withdrawal, Rwanda's grievance against ECCAS started by what Kigali called Rwanda's 'illegal exclusion from 22nd summit held in 2023 in Kinshasa under the DRC's presidency.'⁷³ Rwanda's withdrawal followed its exclusion from assuming the rotating chairmanship of the regional body during the Malabo summit of ECCAS on 7 June 2025.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC IN 2025

This section assesses how the PSC fared during the year in carrying out its mandate. It examines the range of agenda items considered by the Council, the allocation of its time and attention across these issues, and the implications this has for understanding its evolving priorities. The analysis also reviews key outcomes of the PSC's deliberations on the agenda items considered, alongside an assessment of both shifts and continuities in its working methods.

⁷² Eritrean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release: Eritrea has withdrawn its membership from IGAD, 12 December 2025. Available at : <https://shabait.com/2025/12/12/press-release-eritrea-has-withdrawn-its-membership-from-igad/>

⁷³ Rwanda Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rwanda withdraws from ECCAS, 7 June 2025. Available at: <https://x.com/RwandaMFA/status/1931457965271494673>

3.1. Highlights from the activities of the PSC in 2025

During the review period, the PSC convened a total of 69 sessions, representing a slight increase compared to 2024, with five additional sessions held. A total of 78 agenda items were considered, reflecting a decrease of three agenda items compared to the previous year.

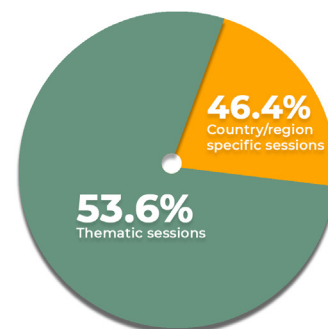
With respect to the balance between thematic and country/region-specific issues, 2025 witnessed a modest narrowing of the gap between the two categories compared to previous years. In recent years, the Council's work has been increasingly dominated by thematic sessions, which accounted for 56 per cent and 62.5 per cent of all meetings in 2023 and 2024, respectively. In 2025, of the 69 sessions convened, 37 (53.6 per cent) were thematic, while 32 (46.4 per cent) focused on country- or region-specific situations.

Despite this slight increase in the proportion of country/region-specific sessions, thematic issues continued to dominate the Council's programme of work during the review period. This trend persists notwithstanding the clear decision taken at the 15th PSC Retreat on Working Methods, held in November 2023 in Tunis, to prioritise country- and region-specific situations.⁷⁴ Similarly, the 17th PSC Retreat, held in November 2025 in Abuja, Nigeria, agreed that the Monthly PSC Provisional Programme of Work should place greater emphasis on pressing

⁷⁴ *Conclusions of the 15th Retreat of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Review of its Working Methods (PSC/Retreat.15 (2023)), 25-27 November 2023, Tunis, Tunisia. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/15th-PSC-Annual-Retreat-Conclusions-EN.pdf>*

country-specific and urgent peace and security situations that are closely aligned with the Council's core mandate.⁷⁵ The retreat further agreed that, where thematic issues are considered, they should be linked to the specific country situations under consideration.⁷⁶

These decisions clearly reflect the Council's stated intention to prioritise country- and region-specific situations over thematic discussions. However, despite these commitments to curb the proliferation of thematic sessions, the PSC has largely failed to reverse the prevailing trend, notwithstanding the marginal narrowing observed during the review period.



Distribution of sessions: Country/region-specific vs. thematic sessions

During the review period, the PSC demonstrated some progress in convening its regular annual consultative meetings with the AU and other international bodies, particularly when compared to the previous year. In 2024, the PSC was able to hold only five of the twelve planned consultative meetings. For 2025, the annual indicative programme

⁷⁵ *Conclusions of the 17th Retreat of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the Review of its Working Methods (PSC/PR/Retreat.17 (2025)), 6-7 November 2025, Abuja, Nigeria. Available at: <https://papsrepositoryafricanunion.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c89b3dfe-a2e6-454a-9c92-63b760c5bfc4/content>*

⁷⁶ *As above*

of activities envisaged eleven such meetings, of which eight were convened. A notable omission during the year was the consultative meeting with the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, which had been scheduled for August. In addition, the annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the RECs/RMs Policy Organs has not taken place since 2023.

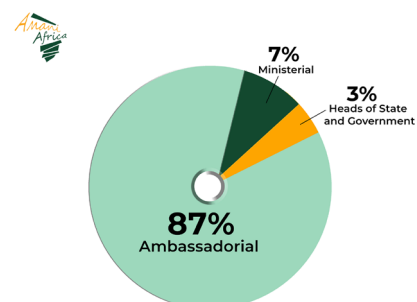
Meanwhile, the PSC held its annual consultative meetings with the UN Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee (EUPSC) as scheduled. Notably, the PSC and the UN Security Council were unable to adopt a joint communiqué in 2025, issuing instead a joint press statement. By contrast, the PSC and the EUPSC achieved a breakthrough by adopting a joint communiqué after failing to do so for three consecutive years, mainly due to disagreements over the language relating to the war in Ukraine.

Another key highlight of the year was the lifting of PSC sanctions against Gabon following the April presidential election, which resulted in the election of General Brice Oligui Nguema, who had led the military coup of August 2023. Although the election clearly contravened Article 25(4) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance—which prohibits perpetrators of coups from participating in elections intended to restore constitutional order—the PSC not only welcomed the election but also lifted Gabon's suspension from AU activities. This decision was taken without emphasising that it should not constitute a precedent or reaffirming the continuing relevance of the Charter provision. This development risks serious repercussions for the AU's well-established anti-coup

norm and may lower the perceived costs and risks associated with military coups on the continent.

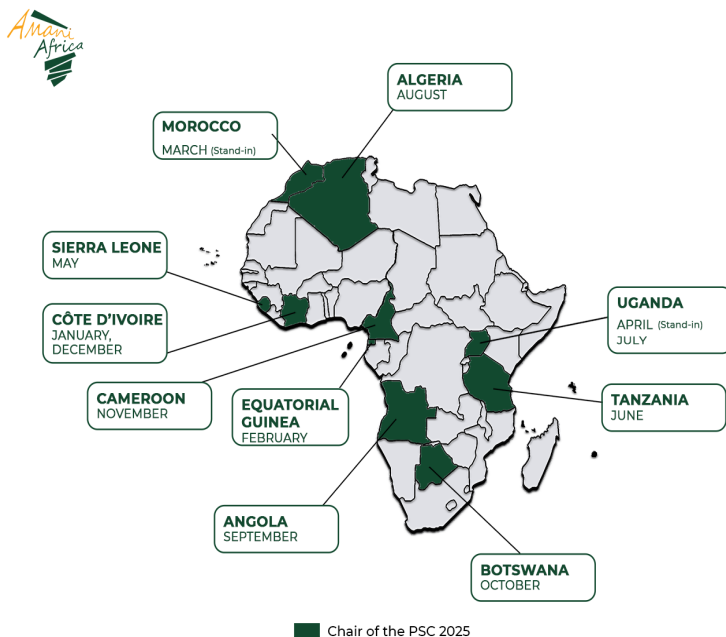
During the year, the PSC convened sessions at all three levels—ambassadorial, ministerial, and heads of state and government—as envisaged under the PSC Protocol. As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of sessions were held at the ambassadorial level, accounting for nearly 87% of the total. Four sessions (6%) were convened at the heads of state and government (HoSG) level, while five (7%) were held at the ministerial level. Compared to 2024, the number of summit-level sessions increased from one to four, while ministerial-level sessions decreased from eight in 2024 to five in 2025.

In terms of outcome documents, the PSC adopted 61 communiqués, 9 press statements, and 5 summary records. No outcome document was adopted for the 1257th session on the update on the operationalisation of the African Standby Force. For the remaining two agenda items—consideration and endorsement of the report on the activities of the PSC and the state of peace and security in Africa, and consideration of the report on the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa—the Council considered the reports without adopting outcome documents.



Level of PSC meetings 2025

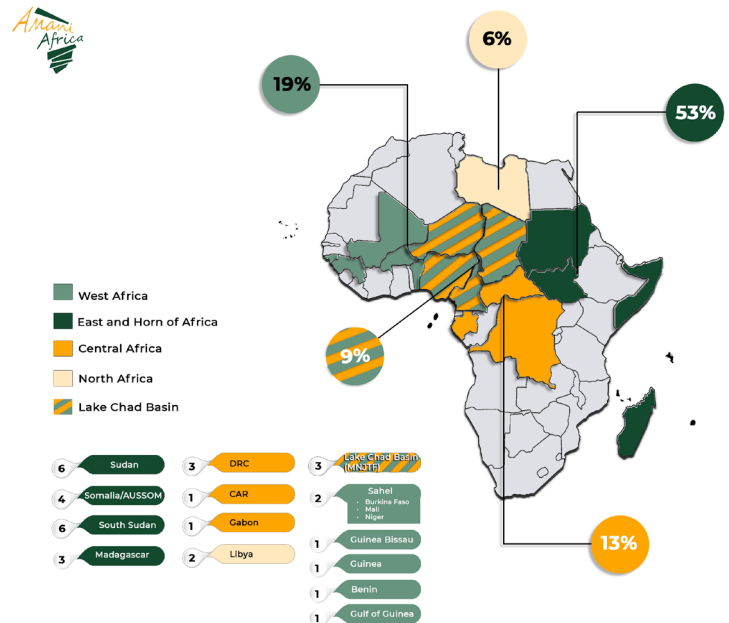
With regard to the chairship of the PSC, the alphabetical order for the monthly rotation was largely adhered to during the review period, in accordance with Article 8(6) of the PSC Protocol and Rule 23 of the PSC Rules of Procedure. However, there were two instances of deviation from this practice. In March, Morocco served as stand-in Chair of the PSC, replacing The Gambia following the conclusion of the term of its Ambassador. Similarly, Uganda served as stand-in Chair of the Council in April.



Chair of the PSC in 2025

The Council's provisional programme of work was also not overly congested during the review period, with an average of six sessions convened per month. In this regard, the 17th PSC Retreat emphasised the need to ensure the development of a 'lean, light, and balanced' Monthly PSC Provisional Programme of Work.

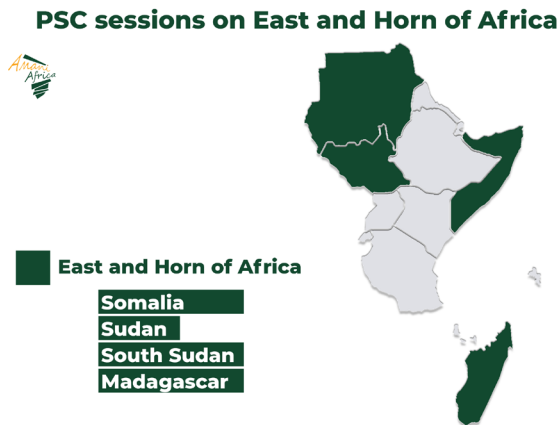
3.2. Engagements of the PSC on country and region specific situations



Regional distribution of sessions 2025

As in previous years, the East and Horn of Africa continued to dominate the agenda of the PSC in 2025. Of the 32 country/region-specific sessions held during the year, 19 sessions (59 percent) were devoted to this region. The Council dedicated five sessions each to Central Africa and West Africa, together accounting for nearly 16% of the total country/region-specific sessions. As in 2023 and 2024, Libya remained the only situation from North Africa discussed by the Council, with two sessions dedicated to the country. In contrast, no sessions addressed situations in Southern Africa region during the review period, representing a decline from 2024, when two sessions (both on Mozambique) were held. In addition, two informal consultations were held between the PSC and countries under political transition in the continent on 18 March and 17 December 2025.

3.2.1. East and Horn of Africa



PSC sessions on East and Horn of Africa

As highlighted above, the East and Horn of Africa continued to receive the highest level of attention from the Council. This is further reflected in the fact that the three most frequently discussed situations in 2025—all from this region—were South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia/AUSSOM. The PSC met six times each to consider the situations in Sudan and South Sudan, making them the most discussed situations on the continent in 2025 and replacing Somalia/AU Mission in Somalia, which had been the most discussed situation in 2024.

The significant increase in sessions dedicated to South Sudan—from two in 2024 to six in 2025—was linked to the sharp deterioration of the country's security and political situation following the March 2025 clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the White Army militia, allegedly linked to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by First Vice President Riek Machar.

Madagascar featured on the agenda of the PSC on three occasions in 2025, following a dramatic turn of events in October, when anti-government protests

escalated into a military coup. This marked Madagascar's first appearance on the Council's agenda in seven years, with the previous discussion having taken place in 2018.

Somalia/AUSSOM

During the review period, the PSC met four times to consider developments in Somalia and the operations of the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM).⁷⁷ Across all four sessions, discussions were largely dominated by the persistent funding challenges facing AUSSOM and progress around its operationalisation.

Throughout the year, AUSSOM has operated under enormous uncertainty due to ongoing and critical financial constraints. When the mission came into force in early 2025, it did so without securing adequate and predictable financing for its estimated annual budget of nearly USD 200 million. This is on top of a funding shortfall of USD 96 million that the new mission inherited from ATMIS. The AU had pinned its hopes on UN Security Council Resolution 2719 on financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations as a viable framework for predictable financing. However, efforts to operationalize the resolution stalled in May after the UNSC failed to reach agreement mainly due to the strong opposition from the United States. As a result, throughout the review period, the PSC has been confronted with two urgent priorities: closing the 2025 budget

⁷⁷ AUSSOM succeeded the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and became operational on 1 January 2025, following PSC endorsement on 1 August 2024 and subsequent authorization by the UN Security Council on 27 December 2024 under Resolution 2767 for an initial 12-month mandate.

gap and securing predictable financing for the remainder of the mission.

The PSC received its first briefing on AUSSOM on 11 April during its 1273rd session. This was an information-sharing briefing by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, with a primary focus on the mission's funding situation, and no communiqué was adopted.

A few weeks later, on 29 April, the PSC convened again for its 1276th session, marking its second meeting on Somalia that month. One of the key outcomes was the Council's endorsement of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda as AUSSOM Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). As Burundi is not participating in AUSSOM, the PSC directed the AU Commission to ensure a smooth and coordinated repatriation of Burundian troops, and urged both the AU and the UN to finalise the necessary procedures. Another key highlight of the session was the PSC's endorsement of the communiqué adopted at the Extraordinary Summit of AUSSOM TCCs, held on 25 April 2025 in Entebbe, Uganda. Among other decisions, the Summit agreed to increase AUSSOM's authorised troop strength of 11,146 by at least 8,000 personnel through bilateral arrangements.

The third meeting took place at ministerial level on 3 July, on the mission's persistent funding challenges and its operational rollout. On the financial front, the PSC took a major step to raise the ceiling of the Crisis Reserve Facility (CRF) of the AU Peace Fund by an additional USD 10 million. This brought the AU's total contribution to the mission to USD 20 million for 2025. The decision was later endorsed by the 47th Ordinary Session of

the AU Executive Council, held later that month in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. On operationalisation of the mission, the PSC agreed to extend Phase I of the mission by a further six months. According to the mission's Concept of Operations (CONOPS), all AU troops were expected to be fully realigned from ATMIS to AUSSOM by 30 June 2025. This timeline was contingent on the repatriation of Burundian troops and Ghanaian Formed Policy Unit (FPU), the relocation of the Sierra Leone FPU from Kismayo to Baidoa, and the deployment of Egyptian forces; none of which had taken place at the time.

Meanwhile, during the period under review, the AU finally convened the long-delayed pledging conference for AUSSOM on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York in September. The outcome, however, was deeply underwhelming. Total pledges amounted to roughly USD 44 million—a negligible sum against the USD 196 million required to run the mission in 2025 alone.⁷⁸

The final dedicated PSC session on Somalia/AUSSOM took place on 15 December and resulted in three key decisions. First, the Council agreed to temporarily suspend the repatriation of Burundian troops and the Ghanaian and Sierra Leone Formed Police Units (FPUs) until Egyptian forces are deployed. Second, it requested the AU Commission to convene a meeting of AUSSOM TCCs/PCCs at the level of Chiefs of Defence Forces to assess the three options identified by the Chairperson of the

⁷⁸ During the high-level event, the United Kingdom pledged GBP 16.5 million, while Italy and Spain each committed USD 1 million. Additional, though modest, contributions were expected from Japan and the Republic of Korea.

AU Commission in its half-year report submitted to the Council and submit recommendations to the Council.⁷⁹ Third, as the mission's mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 2767 expired in early January 2026, the PSC decided to renew AUSSOM's mandate and deployment for a further 12 months and requested UNSC endorsement.

AUSSOM entered 2026 in an even more precarious financial position than when it became effective a year earlier. In addition to outstanding ATMIS liabilities, the mission now faces more than a year of unpaid troop allowances. There is also no clear path toward securing sustainable, predictable, and adequate financing. While the PSC continues to insist that Resolution 2719 remains the most viable funding framework, this option appears increasingly remote given the firm stance of the Trump administration. Alternative avenues—including outreach to non-traditional donors—have shown little promise, and the pledging conference failed to generate meaningful resources. Although the AU has demonstrated commitment by allocating USD 20 million annually, this remains a fraction of what the mission requires.

These pressures have placed enormous strain on the mission and intensified the burden on TCCs. As the UN Secretary-General warned during the September 2025 High-Level Financing Event, the situation in which troops are not paid is 'untenable,' and expecting personnel who risk their lives against Al-Shabaab

to serve without pay is 'unacceptable.'⁸⁰ Prolonged financial stress risks pushing contributing countries to the brink and could ultimately undermine the mission itself.

Looking ahead, much hinges on whether the EU will announce a financial contribution in 2026, though it remains unclear whether such support would address outstanding liabilities. Despite repeated assurances by the PSC and the AU Commission of their commitment to supporting Somalia until lasting peace and stability are achieved, maintaining an open-ended AU mission has proven both unsustainable and unrealistic.⁸¹ Even as the Chairperson of the AU Commission stressed that AUSSOM is 'not an open-ended mission,'⁸² the response to its crisis remains narrowly focused on financing alone while little attention has been given to alternative approaches.⁸³ In this context, 2026 is shaping up to be a decisive year, one that will force the AU to confront hard choices about the future of its nearly two-decade-long engagement in Somalia.

80 Secretary General's remarks at the High-Level Meeting on Financing for the African Union Stabilization Mission in Somalia, 25 September 2025. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statements/2025-09-25/secretary-generals-remarks-the-high-level-meeting-financing-for-the-african-union-stabilization-mission-somalia-prepared-for-delivery>

81 Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest on the African Union Peace and Security Council*, July 2025, p.5. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-july-2025/>

82 Statement of the Chairperson of the AU Commission during the High-Level Meeting on Financing for the AUSSOM, 25 September 2025. Available at: <https://au.int/ar/node/45404>

83 Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest*, July 2025, p.5

79 For more on the three options proposed by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, see Amani Africa *Monthly Digest on the AU Peace and Security Council*, December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-december-2025/>

Sudan

As in 2024, the PSC convened six sessions on the situation in Sudan. Now in its third year since erupting in April 2023, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has increasingly raised the spectre of de facto partition of the country. While the SAF gained momentum and regained control of Khartoum around March, the RSF consolidated its hold over Darfur, deepening the emerging west-east divide.

This de facto partition became more pronounced in May, when both sides announced parallel governing structures.

Given the AU's firm stance on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member states, these developments dominated the PSC's agenda. Half of the Council's sessions were devoted to expressing concern and condemning the establishment of parallel governments in Sudan. The PSC also held its position on maintaining sanctions imposed following the October 2021 military coup, despite pressure from SAF leadership, which sought to condition AU engagement on the lifting of these measures.

Beyond these positions, the PSC struggled to articulate clear strategic guidance on how to enhance the AU's peace efforts in Sudan. Despite the number of sessions devoted to the crisis and the AU's stated ambition to play a central role in mediation, it has been unable to recalibrate its approach or put forward a credible peace process.

As a result, Sudan has emerged as a stark illustration of the AU's failure to assert leadership and its steadily diminishing agency in addressing one of the continent's most serious and protracted

conflicts.

The PSC's first session on Sudan during the review period was held on 14 February at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the margins of the 38th AU Summit. Despite the high-level setting, the [communiqué](#) adopted did not introduce any significant new elements, beyond calling on the warring parties to observe a humanitarian truce during the holy month of Ramadan in March.

At its 1264th session on 11 March, the PSC issued a [press statement](#) in response to the RSF and allied armed and political groups announcing the formation of a parallel government. The Council expressed 'grave concern' and 'outright condemnation,' warning that such actions risked the fragmentation of the country. Reaffirming its commitment to Sudan's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, the PSC categorically rejected the purported parallel government and urged AU Member States and the international community to refrain from recognising or supporting any entity seeking to govern or partition any part of Sudan.

The Council reiterated this position in another [press statement](#) adopted on 29 July during its 1292nd session. While largely echoing the March statement, the July press statement went a step further by declaring that the PSC recognised only the Transitional Sovereignty Council and the civilian government it had appointed. As noted in the July Monthly Digest, this position risked conferring legitimacy on a partisan 'transitional government' formed without an inclusive process or an agreed political roadmap.⁸⁴ By overtly aligning

⁸⁴ Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest on the African Union Peace and Security Council, July 2025*, p.17

the AU with one of the parties to the conflict, it also risked compromising the role of the Union as an impartial peace broker.⁸⁵

Less than a week later, however, the PSC adopted a [communiqué](#) at its 1293rd session on 4 August, which reflected a more cautious and internally balanced approach. While the communiqué maintained a generally more favourable posture toward the SAF-led Transitional Sovereignty Council, it did not carry forward the problematic language from the 29 July press statement claiming exclusive recognition of the SAF-appointed transitional government. Although this formulation appeared in the initial draft, it failed to secure consensus among PSC members and was ultimately excluded from the communiqué.

On 28 October, at its [1308th session](#), the PSC convened an emergency meeting following the fall of El Fasher—the last SAF stronghold in Darfur and the capital of North Darfur—to the RSF, amid reports of widespread atrocities committed during and after the takeover. While the scale and nature of the reported violations could arguably have triggered Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act, the Council's response largely rehashed decisions adopted more than a year earlier, adding only unrealistic timelines for their implementation.⁸⁶ Although the

⁸⁵ As above.

⁸⁶ The PSC, among other measures, requested the AU Commission to develop a plan for the protection of civilians and submit recommendations to the Council within three weeks. It also called for the urgent convening of a joint meeting involving the AU, the UN, IGAD, and the Quad on the situation in Sudan, with the aim of improving coordination and establishing a formal coordination mechanism. In addition, the PSC urged immediate engagement with members of

emergency session helped draw attention to the situation, it ultimately represented a missed opportunity for bold action, including consideration of invoking Article 4(h), building on the joint AU Fact-Finding Mission led by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The joint Fact-Finding Mission recommended that the AU deploys a peacekeeping mission to Sudan consistent with article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act to assist in the process of stabilising the situation in Sudan and offer the necessary civilian protection.⁸⁷

The final PSC session on Sudan was held on 16 December. The meeting was expected to follow up on the decisions and requests made during the Council's 1308th session in October, including the development of a protection-of-civilians plan and the work of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions to identify external actors supporting the warring parties—particularly in light of the three-week deadlines set at that time. Instead, the [communiqué](#) adopted largely reiterated earlier decisions, with limited progress to report.

That said, the session did introduce a few new elements. Notably, the PSC requested the AU Commission to establish

the PSC Presidential Ad-hoc Committee to facilitate negotiations between the leadership of the SAF and the RSF, including the possible convening of an AU Special Summit on Sudan. The Council further reiterated its call for the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions, working in collaboration with CISSA and AFRIPOL, to identify all external actors providing military, financial, or political support to the warring parties, and to submit recommendations to the PSC within three weeks.

⁸⁷ Report of the virtual joint Fact-Finding Mission on the human rights situation in the Sudan, October 2025. Available at: <https://achpr.au.int/en/documents/2025-10-21/fact-finding-mission-human-rights-situation-sudan>

an Inter-Departmental Task Force to coordinate humanitarian assistance and related activities, including post-conflict recovery. The session also drew attention to a new configuration in Sudan's peace efforts—the Quintet. This grouping brings together the AU, IGAD, the UN, the Arab League, and the EU, with the aim of anchoring the political and civilian peace process under AU leadership. The PSC welcomed the establishment of the Quintet while stressing the importance of close coordination with the Quad (US, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Egypt) to ensure synergy and avoid fragmented mediation efforts.

The Quintet came as the AU struggled to gain traction in facilitating dialogue among Sudan's civilian actors. Whether the Quintet can meaningfully advance this process remains uncertain. Recent experience suggests the challenges ahead are considerable: a meeting of Sudanese political and civilian actors scheduled for mid-December in Djibouti was reportedly postponed due to coordination failures among organisers and disagreements among participants.⁸⁸ Looking ahead to 2026, the AU is likely to invest more in leveraging the Quintet to advance the political dialogue track, while the Quad continues to focus on efforts to secure a ceasefire.

South Sudan

The PSC convened six sessions on South Sudan during the review period, a sharp increase from just two sessions in 2024. This surge reflected the serious

⁸⁸ Africa Intelligence, 'Sudan : the Quintet encounters its first challenges in Djibouti, 12 December 2025. Available at: <https://www.africaintelligence.com/eastern-africa-and-the-horn/2025/12/16/the-quintet-encounters-its-first-challenges-in-djibouti.110579371-art>

deterioration of the country's security and political situation following clashes on 4 March in Nasir County, Upper Nile State, between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the White Army militia allegedly linked to Riek Machar's SPLM-IO.

In the aftermath of the fighting, several government officials and senior military officers were arrested or fled the country. Machar, along with seven others, is currently on trial facing charges that include murder, treason, crimes against humanity, and other serious offences related to the White Army attack in Nasir. President Salva Kiir's government also suspended Machar from the vice presidency pending the outcome of the trial.

These developments represent the most serious threat to the fragile peace established under the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and have revived fears of a return to full-scale civil war.

Yet despite sustained engagement, the PSC has struggled to influence developments on the ground. For instance, notwithstanding its repeated calls for the *immediate* and *unconditional* release of Riek Machar and other political detainees—and their reinstatement as a necessary measure to de-escalate tensions and prevent the collapse of the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement—the government treated the matter as criminal rather than political and proceeded with criminal prosecutions. Diplomatic initiatives have likewise failed to stem the deterioration of the situation or to meaningfully alter the political and security trajectory. South Sudan

has therefore become another case in which the PSC was unable to assert leadership or launch a credible peace process to prevent further escalation and salvage the revitalised peace agreement from unraveling. **Unlike contexts such as Sudan, the DRC, or Libya—where external interference and competing mediation efforts could be said to have constrained AU’s agency—South Sudan has seen limited involvement by other actors. As a result, the PSC had greater space to exercise leverage, but ultimately did not.**

The first session during the review period was held on 18 March. A key outcome of [this session](#) was the Council’s request for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to deploy a High-Level delegation to engage the parties on the ground. With the parties to the Revitalised Agreement having agreed to extend the elections from December 2024 to the end of 2026, the Council also called on the AU Commission to prioritise support for the electoral process in South Sudan, including through the use of the AU Peace Fund. Importantly, the Council urged the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) to develop a clear and well-defined electoral timetable.

Later that month, at its 1270th session held on 31 March, the PSC adopted a [press statement](#) in response to a major escalation of the situation following the arrest of First Vice President Riek Machar and his wife on 26 March. The Council called for their *immediate and unconditional* release, emphasising that political differences should be resolved through dialogue within the established mechanisms of the revitalised peace agreement. It further urged the authorities to initiate an all-inclusive and

genuine South Sudanese-led dialogue aimed at restoring trust, national unity, and peace. Building on its earlier request to deploy a High-Level delegation, the Council specified during this session that the mission should be led by the Panel of the Wise. Accordingly, the Chairperson of the Commission deployed the Panel of the Wise to South Sudan in early April.

Another session on South Sudan was convened on 12 June. The [1283rd](#) session followed high-level visits to the country by the Panel of the Wise and the Chairperson of the AU Commission in April and May, respectively. The communiqué adopted during this session offered a critical assessment of the situation, warning of the ‘potential of a full-scale war.’ It characterised the continued detention of Riek Machar, as well as the dismissal and detention of SPLM-IO officials from the R-TGoNU, as a ‘blatant violation of the R-ARCSS.’ In this context, the Council not only reiterated its call for their immediate and unconditional release but also demanded their reinstatement as a necessary step to de-escalate ongoing political tensions and prevent the total collapse of the revitalised peace agreement. The communiqué further called on the Chairperson of the Commission to sustain engagement with President Salva Kiir and ‘regional leaders’ to foster inclusive dialogue, facilitate the release of political detainees, and support full implementation of the R-ARCSS. The reference to ‘regional leaders’ is particularly noteworthy given Uganda’s influence in South Sudan. As highlighted in our monthly digest, it would be difficult for any mediation effort aimed at de-escalating tensions and restoring full commitment to the R-ARCSS to succeed without harnessing Kampala’s leverage.⁸⁹

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The PSC's 1297th session considered the report of its field mission to South Sudan, conducted from 11 to 12 August 2025. The [communiqué](#) adopted at this session, in addition to endorsing the mission report, requested the Chairperson of the Commission to 'urgently appoint an AU High-Level Representative to South Sudan, preferably a former Head of State, to maintain regular engagement with the South Sudanese authorities and other key stakeholders.' The appointment of a High-Level Representative with a high political profile—reportedly among the recommendations of the Panel of the Wise following its April visit—was a significant decision aimed at ensuring sustained AU engagement. However, this recommendation had not been implemented during the review period.

On 18 September, at its 1302nd session, the PSC adopted a [press statement](#) without deliberation. The statement was likely prompted by the commencement of Riek Machar's trial on 11 September, a development that ran counter to the Council's repeated demands for his release and reinstatement. The Council also called for the organisation of a genuine, all-inclusive South Sudanese national political dialogue leading to national reconciliation, which it viewed as critical for the successful conduct of elections scheduled for December 2026.

The PSC's final session on South Sudan during the review period was its 1308th session, held on 28 October. Compared to earlier outcome documents, the [communiqué](#) adopted at this session

adopted a 'more generalised diplomatic tone' regarding the breakdown of relations between the leaders of the parties to the revitalised peace agreement, emphasising all-inclusive high-level political dialogue as the only viable path forward.⁹⁰ It also placed greater emphasis on outstanding critical transitional tasks under the R-ARCSS, including the full deployment of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUFs).

Towards the end of the review period, President Salva Kiir's government initiated steps to amend the R-ARCSS by delinking the general elections scheduled for December 2026 from the permanent constitution-making process, the national population census, and housing data. While the government framed these amendments as necessary to facilitate long-delayed elections, opposition groups rejected them as illegal, arguing that they were adopted without the consent of all parties to the Revitalised Agreement. Against this backdrop, the PSC will need to achieve cessation of hostilities and restoration of to the ceasefire agreement and the convening of a national dialogue for bringing South Sudan back from its descent to full scale war, and navigate the delicate balance between meeting the December 2026 electoral timeline and ensuring that elections are held in a political and security environment conducive to democratic consolidation—rather than becoming yet another trigger for escalation.

Union Peace and Security Council, June 2025, P.6. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-june-2025/>

90 Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest on the African Union Peace and Security Council*, October 2025, P.13. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-june-2025/>

Madagascar

The PSC convened three sessions on Madagascar in response to the unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) that occurred in October. With the resurgence of military coups on the continent since 2020, Madagascar became the eighth AU Member State to be sanctioned for a UCG. Meanwhile, the PSC's struggle to contain the spread of military coups in the continent has continued, with no success in reversing the trend so far.

The first session, the [1305th](#), was held on 13 October following alarming developments in which members of the armed forces joined mass anti-government protests. The Council sought to address what appeared to be a creeping coup in the country.

During this session, the PSC rejected any attempt at an unconstitutional change of government and urged all units of the Madagascar Armed Forces to uphold their constitutional mandate and refrain from interference in political affairs. The Council also took a number of decisions aimed at enhancing AU engagement and responding to the challenges facing the country. These included recommending that the Chairperson of the AU immediately dispatch a high-level delegation to Madagascar; requesting the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently appoint a Special Envoy on Madagascar; and calling for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to support reconciliation and dialogue. Accordingly, in November, the Chairperson of the Commission appointed former Djibouti Ambassador to the AU, Mohamed Idris Farah, as a special envoy to Madagascar.

Of particular note was the decision to strengthen the mandate of the AU Liaison Office in Madagascar. This marked a departure from the PSC's earlier position at its 1297th session in August 2025, when, following consideration of the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Review of AU Liaison Offices, the Council endorsed the closure of several liaison offices, including that of Madagascar.⁹¹ However, at its subsequent [1313th](#) session, the PSC made clear its intention to reinforce the AU's on-the-ground presence in the country through the Liaison Office in order to enable more sustained engagement. This shift is reflected in the Council's emphasis on the urgent need to strengthen the institutional capacity of the AU Liaison Office in Antananarivo, as well as its request to the Chairperson of the Commission to expedite the assumption of duty of the newly appointed Special Representative for Madagascar.

Before the PSC could act on the decisions adopted at its 1305th session, events on the ground quickly moved. On 14 October, the elite Army Corps of Administrative and Technical Personnel and Services (CAPSAT) seized power, prompting the PSC to convene an emergency session on 15 October. The Council characterized the military seizure as an UCG and hence decided to immediately suspend Madagascar from participation in all AU activities of the AU until constitutional order is restored.

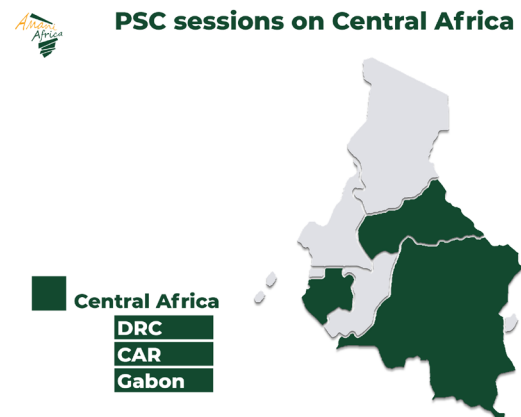
⁹¹ AU Peace and Security Council, *The Third Quarter Report of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the Year 2025 (July-September 2025)*, p.13. Available at: <https://papsrepository.africanunion.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/4333ea76-6c63-47d4-bda7-ce98f82c16e4/content>

The situation also revealed a divergence between the PSC and the regional bloc, SADC, in how the military seizure of power was characterized and in the response adopted. Earlier on 14 October, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation announced the deployment of a fact-finding mission led by the SADC Panel of Elders, a decision subsequently endorsed by the Extraordinary Summit of the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation on 16 October. This was the case notwithstanding the fact that five of the fifteen PSC members—including the PSC Chair for October—who participated in the [1306th](#) session and jointly characterized the developments as an UCG were also members of SADC. It remains unclear why SADC did not similarly characterize the situation as a UCG and align itself with the AU's decision to suspend Madagascar, opting instead for a fact-finding mission, thereby departing from the AU's approach and the spirit of the PSC–RECs/RMs relationship envisaged under the PSC Protocol.

The final session on Madagascar was held on 20 November as the PSC's 1313th session. This session took place against the backdrop of the announcement by Madagascar's interim president of a two-year transition period. In this session, the PSC urged the Malagasy authorities to 'urgently develop a consensual, clear and genuinely inclusive transition roadmap, with clear benchmarks and precise timelines, aimed at a swift conclusion of the transition process.' At its earlier 1306th session, held on 15 October, the PSC had demanded a swift and full return to constitutional order through a civilian-led transitional government, as well as the organisation, as soon as possible, of free, fair, credible, and transparent

elections. These developments do not amount to a swift and full restoration of constitutional order. Rather, they point to a consolidation of military authority. The PSC's outcome document is also silent on the rule excluding coup perpetrators from standing as candidates in elections intended to restore constitutional order.

3.2.2. PSC on the situations in the Central African Region



PSC sessions on Central Africa

The PSC convened five sessions on Central African region in 2025, a slight decrease from the seven held in 2024. With respect to the situation considered by the Council in the region, there was no change from the previous year with the DRC, CAR and Gabon remaining on the agenda. Of these, the PSC dedicated three sessions to the DRC, while the CAR and Gabon were each discussed in one session.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

2025 was a particularly volatile year for eastern DRC. A renewed wave of fighting between the Congolese armed forces, local militias, and the M23 erupted earlier in the year, enabling the group to take control of major towns, including Goma in North Kivu and Bukavu in South Kivu, as well as the strategic town of Uvira, along the border with Burundi, toward the end

of the year. The M23—widely believed to be supported by Rwanda,⁹² an allegation Kigali denies—also consolidated parallel administrative structures in areas under its control, raising serious concerns regarding the DRC's territorial integrity and constitutional administration. The escalation of violence in eastern DRC also raised the spectre of a broader regional conflagration.

At the same time, 2025 also witnessed major diplomatic breakthroughs aimed at addressing the crisis. On 4 December, the Washington DC Accord was signed by the leaders of the DRC and Rwanda, under the auspices of the United States. Earlier, on 15 November, the Government of the DRC and the Alliance Fleuve Congo/Mouvement du 23 mars (AFC/M23) signed the Doha Framework for a Comprehensive Peace Agreement. From the AU and RECs side, efforts were made to reinvigorate regional diplomacy, notably through the joint EAC–SADC appointment in March of a Panel of Facilitators composed of five former presidents to support the DRC peace process. On 1 August, the Co-Chairs of the Joint EAC–SADC [Summit](#) met with the Panel in Nairobi and adopted a framework to merge the Nairobi and Luanda processes. They also agreed on the immediate consolidation of EAC–SADC and AU structures into a single mechanism comprising the AU Mediator and the EAC–SADC Panel of Facilitators. The Summit further called on the AU Commission to ensure that all other initiatives and stakeholders align with this [African-led process](#).

⁹² UN reports have documented allegations of Rwanda's support for M23 and Uganda's historical involvement as a component of a mutual agreement with the government of Congo, but diplomatic caution often avoids direct attributions to maintain regional stability.

Notwithstanding these developments, 2025 also underscored the continued erosion of the AU's agency in addressing its own conflicts. Both the Doha Framework and the Washington DC Accord were brokered by external actors and concluded outside the continent, with the AU absent from the negotiating table.

Against this backdrop, the PSC's engagement on the DRC during the year was largely shaped by the continued escalation of violence in the eastern part of the country.

As in the previous year, the Council met three times to consider the situation in eastern DRC. All of these sessions were held either at ministerial or summit level, reflecting the high level of political attention accorded to the file.

The PSC's [1256th](#) session, held on 28 January, was the first meeting on the DRC convened at ministerial level, following an M23 offensive that resulted in the capture of Minova, Sake, and the regional capital, Goma. During this session, the Council demanded that the M23 immediately and unconditionally cease its attacks, withdraw from all occupied areas in the DRC, and permanently disband and lay down its arms. It also condemned any foreign military support to the M23, called for the immediate cessation of such support, and demanded the withdrawal of external actors from Congolese territory. The Council further proposed that a PSC meeting be held at summit level on the margins of the AU Summit in February.⁹³

⁹³ For further details on the outcome of the session, see Amani Africa Monthly Digest of the African Union Peace and Security Council, January 2025, pp.6-7. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and->

In follow-up, the PSC met again on 14 February at its [1261st](#) session to discuss eastern DRC at summit level. A key outcome of this session was the Council's call to align peace efforts among the AU, EAC, and SADC. To this end, the PSC requested the AU Commission, together with the EAC and SADC Secretariats, to develop a framework to enhance coordination and complementarity between the Luanda and Nairobi processes; to establish a joint AU–EAC–SADC coordination mechanism to provide technical support; and to put in place funding mechanisms to support the joint peace efforts in eastern DRC.⁹⁴

The final session on the DRC was convened on 29 December, at the PSC's 1323rd session, held at ministerial level. Convened against the backdrop of a renewed M23 offensive in December that resulted in the capture of Uvira, the Council demanded the immediate and full withdrawal of the AFC/M23 from Uvira and all other occupied areas in eastern DRC. The communiqué adopted at the session also strongly condemned the establishment of parallel administrative structures in territories under M23 control and declared such actions null and devoid of any legal effect. This position, consistent with the Council's approach in the situation in Sudan, reflects the AU's strong emphasis on respect for Member States' sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as concerns over the risk of de facto partition.

During the same session, the PSC requested the Panel of Facilitators to propose urgent measures aimed at de-

escalating the situation in eastern DRC and to report to the AU Mediator, who is to present those proposals to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in February 2026.

Looking ahead to 2026, the PSC is expected to continue its engagement on the DRC file at the highest level. It remains to be seen, however, to what extent the Council will be able to regain a meaningful role in the peace process, as it previously sought to do through the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

Gabon

Gabon held a presidential election on 12 April, resulting in the victory of Brice Oligui Nguema, the leader of the August 2023 coup, and formally bringing the post-coup transition to an end. During the review period, the PSC considered Gabon only once. Its [1277th](#) session, held on 30 April, was convened primarily to lift the sanctions imposed on the country since 31 August 2023 following the election.

The decision to lift the sanctions, however, raises a fundamental question about consistency with the AU's anti-coup framework. General Nguema's participation in—and victory at—the election appears difficult to reconcile with Article 25(4) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which expressly bars perpetrators of unconstitutional changes of government from contesting elections meant to restore constitutional order or from holding positions of responsibility within state institutions.

As observed in the *Monthly Digest*, the PSC not only further dented its already precarious credibility in

[security-council-january-2025/](#)

⁹⁴ See para. 11 of the PSC Communiqué adopted at its 1261st session, held on 14 February 2025.

terms of upholding the AU norms on unconstitutional changes of government but also sends a message that upholding the rule under Article 25(4) of the African Charter is optional.⁹⁵ Apart from paving the way for all those who seized power unconstitutionally in the other countries suspended from the AU for legitimising themselves by holding elections, the PSC's failure to use the session for expressing its commitment to and the continuing application of the AU norm signals to all militaries on the continent that the disincentive for staging a coup is removed and the rewards of staging a coup has now become far greater than the costs.⁹⁶

Central African Republic (CAR)

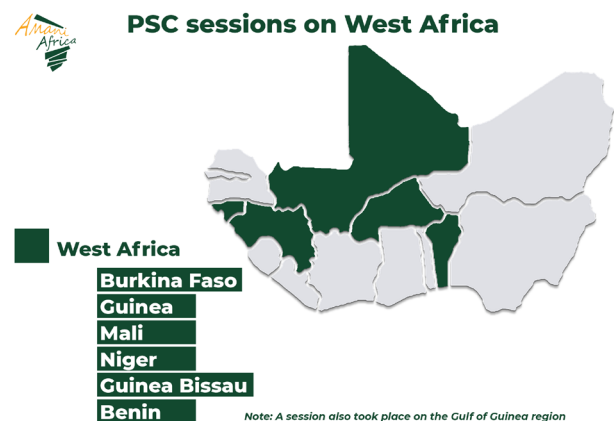
On 19 September, the PSC convened its [1302nd](#) session to receive an update on the situation in CAR. During the session, the Council presented a largely positive assessment of the government, commending its leadership for what it described as a 'demonstrable commitment' to the full implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (PAPR-CAR). The harmonized elections scheduled for 28 December was one of the focuses of the session. In this regard, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to draw up a list of all necessary financial, technical and material resources to facilitate the completion of the electoral process. Beyond this, the communiqué adopted at the session introduced little by way of new substantive content. One

⁹⁵ Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest on the African Union Peace and Security Council, April 2025*, p.15. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-april-2025/>

⁹⁶ As above.

point of note, however, was the Council's reiteration of its 'outright condemnation of all forms of foreign interference that fuel conflicts in Africa, in flagrant violation of relevant PSC communiqués and United Nations Security Council resolutions.' However, as this statement was framed in continent-wide terms rather than being tied specifically to the situation in CAR, its relevance to the country under consideration in this session was diluted.

3.2.3. PSC on the situations in West Africa



PSC sessions on West Africa

West Africa has continued to experience a resurgence of military coups, reinforcing its position as a region most affected by UCG on the continent. In 2025, Guinea-Bissau was added to the list of countries suspended from AU activities following a military coup in November, while an attempted coup in Benin was ultimately averted toward the end of the year. Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea remained under AU sanctions throughout the review period. On the other hand, terrorism has continued to devastate the region, with the Central Sahel emerging as the global epicentre of terrorist activity and the threat increasingly spilling over into the coastal states of West Africa. PSC sessions devoted to the region therefore focused on these interlinked security and

governance challenges.

During the review year, the PSC convened five sessions specifically dedicated to West Africa. This number rises to nine when sessions on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram operating in the Lake Chad Basin and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea—which span both West and Central Africa—are taken into account. The situation in the Sahel was discussed on two occasions, while Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Benin each received a dedicated session. Countries undergoing political transitions in the region—namely Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea—were also discussed alongside countries under political transition from other regions within the framework of informal PSC consultations. These consultations took place on 18 March and 17 December.

Although the number of PSC sessions devoted to West Africa represents a considerable increase compared to the previous year, when only three sessions were held, it remains important to note that the overall level of PSC engagement in the region has declined steadily compared to earlier years. This level of engagement does not correspond to the gravity of the peace and security challenges currently confronting West Africa.

On the other hand, the review period witnessed relatively enhanced diplomatic engagement by the AU, particularly with Sahel countries under transition,⁹⁷ and

⁹⁷ AU diplomatic engagements with the transitional authorities in Sahel countries during the review period included the AU Commission Chairperson's meeting with representatives of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in May; the visit of Angola's Foreign Minister as Special Envoy on behalf of AU Chairperson João Lourenço; and the July

this engagement also paid attention to the existential threat of terrorism facing these countries, going beyond efforts to push for the expediting of the complex political transition processes. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the decision by the joint consultative meeting of the PSC and ECOWAS in May to develop a security cooperation framework with the three central Sahelian countries to respond more effectively to the crisis.⁹⁸

The Sahel

Two PSC sessions were dedicated to the situation in the Sahel. The PSC's [1279th](#) session, held on 14 May, was convened as an open session focusing on organised transnational crime and its implications for peace and security in the region. During this session, the Council requested the AU Commission, in coordination with AFRIPOL, the AU Centre for Countering Terrorism, and CISSA, to undertake a comprehensive study on organised transnational crime in the Sahel. The PSC further requested the Commission to coordinate with AFRIPOL, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and other relevant stakeholders to develop tailored responses that reflect the specific geographic and logistical characteristics of each criminal corridor, including joint mobile units and specialised port and desert surveillance capacities. In addition,

appointments of President Évariste Ndayishimiye of Burundi as Special Envoy for the Sahel and former Gambian Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara as Special Representative for Mali and the Sahel and Head of MISAHEL.

⁹⁸ See paragraph 3 of the 2nd annual joint consultative meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Mediation and Security Council of the Economic Community of West African States, 16 May 2025, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

the Council recommended the creation of a continental mechanism, anchored within AFRIPOL, to continuously map, analyse, and update information on criminal flows and networks, and to disseminate such intelligence securely to relevant law enforcement bodies.

The second session was held on 30 September at the ministerial level. At this [1304th](#) session, the Council expressed deep concern over the deterioration of security and humanitarian conditions in the Sahel, as well as the slow pace of political transition processes in the region. The most notable—and long overdue—decision adopted by the PSC was the establishment of a Task Force to support Sahelian countries in their fight against terrorism, a measure repeatedly advocated in various Amani Africa analyses on the Sahel. The effectiveness of this initiative will be critical in restoring the AU's role in peace and security and in stemming the alarming deterioration of the situation in the region. Emphasising the need for intensified diplomatic engagement with Sahelian countries undergoing political transitions, the Council also welcomed Angola's proposal to convene a Summit on the situation in the Sahel, although no specific timeline was indicated.

Guinea

The only session convened on Guinea was for the consideration of the report of its field mission to Conakry, conducted from 30 to 31 May 2025. The mission took place as Guinea was moving toward the conclusion of its four-year transitional period following the military coup of September 2021. These steps included the organisation of a constitutional referendum in September, followed by

general elections in December. The field mission appeared aimed at encouraging the Guinean authorities to follow the Gabon path—organise elections and then the lifting of AU sanction.

However, both during the field mission and in the communiqué adopted at its [1284th](#) session on 19 June, the PSC failed to recall the obligation of transitional authorities to refrain from participating in elections, as stipulated under Article 25(4) of ACDEG. Instead, the Council requested the Commission to provide technical and financial support for the constitutional referendum and the general elections. The general elections were held on 28 December, resulting in the election of coup leader General Mamady Doumbouya; in January 2026, this subsequently led to the lifting of sanctions by the Council.

Guinea Bissau

The PSC convened an emergency session on 28 November, at its [1315th](#) session, to consider the situation in Guinea-Bissau following the military seizure of power on 26 November. The coup unfolded just one day before the National Elections Commission was scheduled to release the provisional results of the closely contested presidential runoff between the incumbent, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, and his main challenger, Fernando Dias. According to the head of ECOWAS's election observation mission, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, the events surrounding the military coup were 'bizarre' and did not conform to the typical pattern of a military takeover. He characterised the development as a 'ceremonial coup,' suggesting that it was orchestrated by the incumbent President Embaló himself to interrupt an electoral

process that was likely to produce a fair and credible outcome.

During this session, the Council immediately suspended Guinea-Bissau from participation in all activities of the Union, in line with its established anti-coup norms. The communiqué adopted at the session was relatively strong and precise, as it called upon the military leadership to respect the will of the people and to allow the National Electoral Commission to finalise the tabulation and proclamation of election results, as well as to see the electoral process through to its conclusion, including the inauguration and assumption of office by the winner. As observed in our *Monthly Digest*, the PSC viewed the completion of the electoral process—rather than negotiations or interim arrangements—as the primary pathway to the restoration of constitutional order. In this regard, the communiqué was clear and purposeful: it positioned the AU on the side of the electorate's expressed will, treated the November elections as the decisive reference point for political legitimacy, and translated this position into a concrete expectation that the military should step aside, allow the results to be concluded, and enable the declared winner to assume office.

Although the PSC also threatened to impose targeted sanctions against military leaders interfering in the political process, both the PSC and the regional bloc, ECOWAS, ultimately failed to reverse the coup and restore constitutional order. This outcome clearly highlighted the gaps in follow-through, particularly in implementing decisions and exercising effective leverage to alter developments on the ground.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ For a detailed discussion of how the AU

Meanwhile, the Council agreed to convene a summit-level meeting on the resurgence of UCG on the continent. However, once again, no timeframe was attached to this decision, making follow-up and implementation difficult.

Benin

The PSC's emergency session on Benin, held on 7 December, was prompted by an attempted military coup on the same day, which was subsequently averted through swift coercive measures taken by regional actors—primarily Nigeria—under the auspices of ECOWAS, and undertaken in close coordination with, and with logistical support from, French forces. However, in the Press Statement adopted following its [1316th](#) session, the PSC applauded the 'swift action taken by the Beninese authorities to defend the constitutional order,' without acknowledging the critical role played by regional actors. In the statement, the Council not only strongly condemned the attempted coup but also requested the Beninese authorities to hold the perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Maritime Security in Gulf of Guinea

At its [1275th](#) session, held on 23 April, the PSC discussed the imperatives of the Combined Maritime Task Force in addressing piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. A key outcome of the session was the PSC's

and ECOWAS responded to the situation—and how both organisations failed to follow through on their decisions, ultimately failing to reverse the military coup in Guinea-Bissau—see Solomon Dersso, Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, 'Guinea Bissau, not Benin, the real test of the efficacy of ECOWAS's response to coups', 31 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/guinea-bissau-not-benin-the-real-test-of-the-efficacy-of-ecowass-response-to-coups/>

endorsement of the Combined Maritime Task Force (CMTF) for the Gulf of Guinea as a standing, ready-to-deploy force capable of delivering rapid and coordinated maritime security responses across the region. In this regard, the PSC requested the AU Commission to take practical steps to collaborate with the CMTF to identify the Task Force's capacity needs and to provide the requisite support, including through the Continental Logistics Base (CLB), with a view to positioning the Task Force as a critical naval component of the African Standby Force operating in the Gulf of Guinea.

The session also served as an opportunity to follow up on the implementation of previous decisions, including the conduct of the AMANI AFRICA III Command Post Maritime Exercise, which seeks to enhance the maritime capabilities of the African Standby Force in addressing maritime threats in continental waters. In addition, the PSC reiterated its request for the AU Commission to expedite the establishment and operationalisation, within the Commission, of a Security Unit, without financial implications, in accordance with its decision adopted at its 1174th session.

Lake Chad Basin



MNJTF Area of Operation

The PSC convened three sessions on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. Two of these sessions focused on consideration of the report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the activities of the MNJTF and the renewal of its mandate, while the remaining session addressed the Regional Strategy for Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience (RS-SRR), alongside an update on MNJTF operations.

The first session on the MNJTF, the [1254th](#), was convened on 13 January. Its main outcome was the renewal of the mandate of the Force for a further 12 months, effective from 1 February 2025. A key issue highlighted during the session was the need to strengthen coordination and ensure the effective participation of MNJTF troop-contributing countries. The MNJTF operated throughout 2024 without the participation of Niger. In this context, the PSC emphasized the need to ensure the 'active participation of the Republic of Chad and the Republic of Niger in the activities of the Mission.' However, rather than calling for joint engagement by the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the PSC entrusted the responsibility of engaging Niger—towards its full return to the MNJTF—to the LCBC Secretariat. This represented a missed opportunity for the AU to assume and exercise joint leadership, instead leaving this diplomatic responsibility entirely to the LCBC Secretariat.

At its [1282nd](#) session, convened on 10 June, the PSC endorsed the revised five-year Regional Strategy for Stabilization, Resilience and Recovery (RS-SRR) for Boko Haram-affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin, as adopted by the 70th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the LCBC held in February 2025 in Niamey,

Niger. The Council further requested the AU Commission to enhance its support to, and collaboration with, the LCBC in the implementation of the revised RS-SRR. It recalled that the Commission had provided USD 1 million from the Crisis Reserve Facility of the AU Peace Fund to support implementation of the Strategy.¹⁰⁰

The final session, the [1318th](#), held on 15 December, again renewed the mandate of the MNJTF for a further 12 months, covering the period from 1 February 2026 to 31 January 2027. A notable aspect of this session was the PSC's request for the AU Commission, in consultation with the United Nations, to consider the application of UN Security Council Resolution 2719 to fund MNJTF activities. The deliberation during the session and the request to explore the application of UN Security Council Resolution 2719 for financing MNJTF activities is one of the communiqué's more forward-looking and new elements, signalling an awareness of the limits of ad hoc partner support.¹⁰¹ However, without a clearer roadmap, this provision functions more as a strategic aspiration than an actionable financing solution.¹⁰² As such, it needs to be backed up by a strategy and roadmap for unlocking the application of Resolution 2719 having regard to the terms of the

¹⁰⁰ Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and the renewal of its mandate (PSC/PR/RPT.1318 (2025)) submitted to the 1318th session, held on 15 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1318-Report-EN.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the African Union Peace and Security Council, December 2025, p.7. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/monthly-digest-on-the-african-union-peace-and-security-council-december-2025/>

¹⁰² As above.

resolution.¹⁰³

As in previous sessions, the PSC took note of the persistent capacity challenges facing the MNJTF, including inadequate and insufficient funding and significant logistical gaps—particularly the shortage of air and amphibious assets, as well as limited anti-drone and anti-improvised explosive device (IED) capabilities. Accordingly, the Council requested the Commission to support the mobilization of resources, including air and amphibious assets and anti-drone and anti-IED equipment, ahead of the next phase of operations, Operation Lake Sanat III. In this context, the European Union has committed approximately EUR 40 million for the period 2025–2026 to finance additional support to the MNJTF through the AU Commission.¹⁰⁴

3.2.4. PSC on the situation in the North Africa region



PSC sessions on North Africa

¹⁰³ As above.

¹⁰⁴ Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and the renewal of its mandate (PSC/PR/RPT.1318 (2025)) submitted to the 1318th session, held on 15 December 2025, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1318-Report-EN.pdf>

The PSC's engagement with situations in North Africa during the review period remained limited to Libya, as was the case in the previous year. Two sessions were convened, representing one additional session compared to 2024. While the signing of the Libyan Reconciliation Charter by some political actors in mid-February, on the margins of the AU Summit and under the auspices of the AU, constituted a milestone in efforts to restore peace and stability in the country, the situation in Libya remained fragile. This fragility was underscored by the military confrontation that erupted in Tripoli in May 2025. Moreover, the Council's long-standing decisions to undertake a field mission to Tripoli and to relocate the AU Liaison Office to the Libyan capital did not materialise during the review period. Libya is another case in respect of which the role of the AU remains marginal, if not totally irrelevant.

Libya

On 23 May, the PSC convened its [1280th](#) meeting to consider the situation in Libya. This session followed the declaration of a state of emergency by the Interior Ministry after the assassination of Abdel Ghani al-Kikli, widely known as "Gheniwa," a key figure in the Stability Support Apparatus (SSA), on 12 May 2025 in Tripoli. The killing triggered intense clashes among rival militias, including the 444th Combat Brigade. During the session, the PSC expressed 'deep concern over the fragile security situation in Tripoli and the recent armed clashes,' called for an 'unconditional and permanent ceasefire,' and urged all parties 'to refrain from actions or statements that could further destabilise the fragile security situation.'

The PSC's [1291st](#) session, convened at summit level on 24 July, focused in particular on the protection of African migrants and refugees. The Council expressed grave concern over serious violations of the fundamental human rights of African migrants and refugees in Libya and urged the Libyan authorities to take concrete measures, including the closure of inhumane detention centres. The PSC further requested the AU, UN and EU to reactivate the Tripartite Task Force on Migration. In addition, it requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a Special Envoy on Migration, in recognition of the gravity migration challenges in Africa.

3.3. PSC's work on thematic and other issues

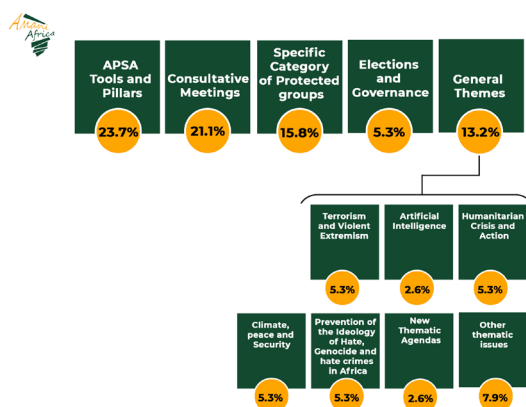
A total of 37 thematic sessions were convened during the year, illustrating both the density and the expanding scope of the PSC's thematic work.

A defining characteristic of the 2025 agenda was the overwhelming centrality of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), related engagements, which accounted for 8 sessions (approximately 21%). These discussions spanned a wide range of APSA instruments and pillars, including early warning and risk mapping, peace funding through the Crisis Reserve Facility, security sector reform, and institutional coordination with AU organs, Regional Economic Communities, and the United Nations.

Alongside this architecture-heavy agenda, the PSC maintained consistent attention to people-centred and protection-oriented themes. Six sessions were dedicated to specific categories

of protected groups, notably women, children, youth, and education in conflict situations. The recurrence of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) discussions, culminating in a high-level session marking 25 years of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, together with sessions on child soldiers, children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG), and Youth, Peace and Security, reaffirmed the Council's normative commitment to inclusive and human security-oriented approaches.

Notably, 2025 also witnessed the consolidation of thematic areas that do not yet sit neatly within existing PSC categorisations. Sessions on media and peace and security and mine action, related engagements signal an expanding thematic horizon. In a nutshell, the 2025 thematic agenda portrays a PSC that remains deeply invested in strengthening continental peace and security institutions, while gradually adapting to new risks and normative priorities. However, the persistent dominance of institutional and process-oriented themes also raises questions about balance, particularly in relation to the Council's capacity to translate normative deliberations into timely, context-specific preventive and responsive action.



Distribution of thematic sessions

African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Tools and Pillars

During the review period, the PSC devoted sustained attention to a wide range of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) tools and pillars, reflecting both the breadth of its mandate and the growing complexity of peace and security challenges on the continent. While these engagements demonstrate continued normative commitment to APSA, they also reveal enduring structural, political, and operational constraints that limit the Architecture's effectiveness. Across the various sessions, a recurring tension emerged between institutional ambition and implementation capacity underpinning peace and security decision-making at continental and regional levels.

This tension was particularly evident in the Council's engagement with peace support operations, most notably during its 1257th session of 30 January 2025, which focused on the operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF).¹⁰⁵ Long envisioned as the backbone of Africa's collective security system, yet deliberations during the session reaffirmed that, more than two decades after its conception, the ASF remains hamstrung by structural misalignment, logistical deficiencies, and political fragmentation.¹⁰⁶ The Council reaffirmed the ASF's central role as Africa's primary mechanism for peace support operations while noting that its effectiveness

¹⁰⁵ This session did not produce an outcome document.

¹⁰⁶ For more information, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Update on the operationalization of the African Standby Force', 29 January 2025. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/update-on-the-operationalisation-of-the-african-standby-force-asf/>

continues to be constrained by structural, political, and operational gaps.

A major focus of the discussion was logistical and financial readiness. While the establishment of the Continental Logistics Base in Douala marked progress, the incomplete development of regional logistics depots continues to limit rapid deployment by RECs/RMs. Sustainable and predictable financing for ASF deployments also remains unresolved, with persistent challenges in mobilising resources, operationalising the AU Peace Fund, and establishing a clear cost-sharing framework among AU member states and RECs. But these discussions did not address the underlying political reluctance of Member States to assume collective financial responsibility for continental security.

The PSC further underscored the importance of integrating International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law into ASF doctrine and practice, highlighting the persistent gap between doctrinal commitments and enforcement in increasingly complex and asymmetric conflict environments. The session also highlighted that the challenges confronting the ASF are symptomatic of broader institutional misalignment within APSA, particularly between the AU and RECs/RMs. Despite policy advances, weak implementation, AU-RECs institutional misalignment, and competing regional interests, fragmented decision-making processes, and delays in the ASF strategic review continue to undermine coherence. The ongoing strategic review are expected to clarify the ASF's future direction, but progress remains slow due to funding gaps and unresolved governance issues.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ The AU Peace Support Operations Division

However, as emphasized by the PSC, the review should be accompanied by decisive political action to resolve these long-standing structural constraints.

Against this backdrop of operational and institutional fragility, the Council's engagement with preventive diplomacy offered a contrasting yet equally revealing perspective on APSA's implementation challenges. At its [1264th](#) session of 11 March, the PSC considered the activities of the Panel of the Wise (PoW) and its subsidiary mechanisms, reaffirming the Panel's central role in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding. Particular attention was devoted to South Sudan, where escalating political tensions continue to threaten the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).¹⁰⁸ The Council's call for enhanced resourcing and a strengthened AU presence on the ground reflected recognition that preventive diplomacy remains one of APSA's most cost-effective tools, yet one that is chronically under-resourced.¹⁰⁹

(PSOD) convened a Consultative Meeting on the Strategic Review of the ASF on 16–17 October 2025 in Accra to assess its progress since achieving Full Operational Capability in 2016 and to align it with evolving peace and security challenges. Convened by the AUC, the meeting focused on lessons from past PSOs, improving flexibility and interoperability, and addressing financing and operational gaps. Its outcomes will inform a Strategic Review Report aimed at strengthening the ASF's effectiveness within APSA.

¹⁰⁸ Following the PSC's call during its 1265th and 1270th sessions, the Panel of the wise undertook a high-level visit to South Sudan in April 2025. Source: Amani Africa South Sudan Diplomatic Tracker. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/au-timeline-of-diplomatic-efforts-on-south-sudan/>

¹⁰⁹ Paragraph 4 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1264th session, held on 11 March 2025,

The session also underscored the growing expectations placed on the Panel, including rapid deployment to emerging crises, sustained engagement in fragile transitions, and closer collaboration. To this end, the PSC requested the AU Commission to enhance regular early warning analysis for the Panel of the Wise and undertake joint scenario-building with experts, including NeTT4Peace.¹¹⁰ While these expectations underscore the Panel's strategic relevance, they also expose enduring ambiguities regarding its mandate. As highlighted in our analysis of the session, the expanding scope of the Panel's engagement risks blurring the lines between preventive diplomacy, mediation, and post-agreement support, particularly in the absence of commensurate institutional and financial backing.¹¹¹ In this regard, the experience of the Panel mirrors a broader APSA pattern: strong political endorsement accompanied by limited operational capacity.

The Council's engagement with Security Sector Reform (SSR) during its [1278th](#) session of 7 May was another session that considered APSA's governance and prevention tools. Drawing on experiences from Member States including The Gambia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, and South Sudan, the session marked a notable shift in the PSC's framing of SSR, from a predominantly technical exercise to a deeply political process intrinsically linked to governance, legitimacy, and

available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/psc-1264.comm-en.pdf>

¹¹⁰ As above (Paragraph 10).

¹¹¹ Amani Africa, *Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'PSC called for reinforcement of the Panel of the Wise's Preventive Diplomacy role in South Sudan'*, March 2025, P.4. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/March-monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

state-society relations. By underscoring the importance of political will, national ownership, and constitutional reform, the Council more explicitly aligned SSR with APSA's conflict prevention mandate. Deliberations during the session also highlighted persistent challenges related to capacity-building, coordination, and sustainability. While the Council encouraged experience-sharing, training, and the establishment of SSR champions, it also implicitly acknowledged that awareness of SSR's broader political significance remains limited among key stakeholders, including parliamentarians, political parties, and civil society.

Financing once again emerged as a critical fault line. The PSC's call for Member States to integrate SSR-related expenditures into national budgets reinforces the principle of national ownership, yet it also risks placing unrealistic expectations on fragile states with limited fiscal space. The absence of explicit reference to the AU Peace Fund as a financing instrument for SSR further illustrates the fragmented nature of APSA's financial architecture and the lack of coherence between its governance and financing pillars.

In the Communiqué adopted by the session, the PSC requested the AU Commission to continue providing technical support to South Sudan in implementing the Revitalised Peace Agreement, including through the deployment of SSR experts, and to strengthen coordination on SSR by enhancing collaboration among relevant units within the Commission, notably the PCRDC Centre. It also called on the AU Panel of the Wise to help mobilise the political will and trust necessary to link SSR processes with broader governance

reforms in Member States undergoing SSR. In addition, the PSC urged AU Member States to integrate SSR-related expenditures into their national budgets and appealed to international partners to provide sustained, long-term support to countries implementing SSR processes.¹¹²

The PSC's engagement with post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD)¹¹³ during its 1312th session of 17 November further reinforced these recurring implementation challenges within APSA. Convened to launch the AU PCRD Awareness-Raising Week, the session acknowledged tangible progress made by the AU PCRD Centre through country-level initiatives and Quick Impact Projects aimed at rebuilding institutions, strengthening community resilience, and advancing peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts. The Council also considered the Annual Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on PCRD and Peacebuilding, which highlighted results achieved across several regions of the continent in 2025.¹¹⁴

At the same time, the discussions exposed familiar structural constraints, particularly the persistent mismatch between expanding mandates and limited resources. While recognising the coordinating role of the High-Level Working Group on PCRD and Peacebuilding, the Council underscored the urgent need to equip the PCRD Centre with adequate financial and institutional capacity to effectively implement its mandate. In this regard, the PSC requested the AU Commission to provide budgetary allocations for the PCRD Centre in the upcoming financial year, strengthen partnerships with African financial institutions and other partners to mobilise innovative financing for post-conflict recovery, and implement existing PCRD and stabilisation strategies drawing on national and regional best practices.¹¹⁵ The decision to extend the PCRD Awareness-Raising period from one week to one month from 2026 also reflected the Council's recognition of the need to elevate PCRD politically within APSA.

Questions of financing and sustainability were addressed more directly during the PSC's 1285th session of 27 June, which considered the Peace Fund's Crisis Reserve Facility and endorsed an additional USD 10 million allocation to AUSSOM for 2025. This decision represented an important political signal, demonstrating the AU's willingness to mobilise its own limited resources in support of an AU-led mission facing acute financial stress. By raising the Peace Fund's total contribution to AUSSOM to USD 20 million, the Council sought to reaffirm African responsibility

¹¹² Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1278th session, held on 7 May 2025, available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1278-comm_en.pdf

¹¹³ In addition to this agenda, during the session the PSC also adopted ToRs of the PSC Subcommittee on PCRD during its 1297th session. The ToR is available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1297-ToRs-on-PSC-Sub-Committee-on-PCRD-EN.pdf>

¹¹⁴ African Union, 'Annual Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) on post conflict reconstruction development & peacebuilding January – December 2025', 17 November 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1312-Annual-Report-EN.pdf>

¹¹⁵ Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1278th session, held on 7 May 2025, available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1278-comm_en.pdf

for African peace operations, particularly in light of uncertainties surrounding the application of UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023).

However, the scale of AUSSOM's financial requirements, far exceeding the allocated amount, underscored the structural limitations of relying primarily on accrued interest rather than deploying the Peace Fund's endowment. Discussions during the session also revealed persistent implementation challenges, including low budget execution rates for both Crisis Reserve Facility allocations and Peace Fund pilot projects. While improvements were noted in 2025, these challenges raise concerns about institutional absorption capacity and administrative bottlenecks. Moreover, continued uncertainty regarding when and how the AU intends to draw on the Peace Fund's endowment undermines its credibility as a transformative financing mechanism within APSA.¹¹⁶

The Council's engagement with early warning and early action during its 1298th session of 27 August and 1320th session of 16 December further highlighted the systemic nature of APSA's implementation challenges. Both meetings acknowledged that the AU already has robust instruments for conflict prevention, yet their impact is weakened by poor implementation, fragmented coordination, and insufficient political will. To address this, the PSC placed strong emphasis on institutionalizing foresight tools, most notably the creation

¹¹⁶ For a detailed analysis on the session, see Amani Africa monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'PSC endorses an additional \$10 million for AUSSOM in 2025, raising AU's total financial contribution to \$20 million', June 2025, Page 11. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/June-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

of a dynamic, continuously updated risk-mapping mechanism and ensuring that CEWS products directly inform PSC agenda-setting, preventive diplomacy, and mediation.

The sessions also converged on the need to bridge the persistent gap between early warning and early action. The 1298th meeting prioritized technical innovations such as a **African Union's Continental Early Warning System** and the **AU Counter Terrorism Centre (CEWS-AUCTC)** Joint Analytical Cell, quarterly continental security outlooks, and protocols for integrated preventive diplomacy¹¹⁷, while the 1320th meeting reinforced the operational side by demanding horizon-scanning briefings, systematic information-sharing, and stronger Member State engagement with AU agencies.¹¹⁸ Both sessions highlighted governance deficits, socio-economic exclusion, and denialism as structural drivers of instability, urging inclusive approaches that empower women and youth, strengthen institutions, and foster accountability.

At the same time, the PSC broadened its scope to address emerging transnational threats, terrorism, organized crime, cyber exploitation, and illicit financial flows. In this regard, the Council called for a Continental Illicit-Finance Task Force, activation of counterterrorism and sanctions sub-committees, and closer collaboration with the UN and technology partners to counter digital radicalization.

¹¹⁷ See the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1298th session, held on 27 August 2025, available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1298.comm.en.pdf>

¹¹⁸ See the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1320th session, held on 16 December 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1320.comm.en.pdf>

Taken together, the outcomes reflect a dual agenda: reinforcing governance and inclusivity as the foundation of peace, while equipping the AU with predictive, data-driven tools to anticipate and respond to crises.¹¹⁹

These concerns regarding institutional coherence and effectiveness also featured prominently during the PSC's 1294th session of 6 August, which examined the role of AU ad hoc governance, peace and security mechanisms.¹²⁰ While such mechanisms have often enabled flexible and timely political engagement, their proliferation has raised questions about coherence, accountability, and sustainability within APSA. Rather than endorsing further expansion, the Council opted for a more deliberative approach, requesting a comprehensive study to assess the effectiveness of ad hoc mechanisms, aiming to draw lessons for the ongoing APSA review and directing its Committee of Experts to deliberate on the matter, based on the background document prepared by the Commission and provide recommendations to the Council at the ambassadorial level.

In recognition of the existing challenges in the implementation of APSA tools, in 2025, the PSC held a session that provided an opportunity for institutional introspection. At its 1303rd Summit-level session on 24 September 2025, the PSC, chaired by Angola's President João Lourenço, reaffirmed that the Union has the tools to prevent and resolve conflicts but stressed the need for stronger

¹¹⁹ See the analysis of the Session on Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, August 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/August-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹²⁰ The outcome of the meeting was captured in a summary record rather than a communiqué or press statement.

implementation.¹²¹ The communiqué emphasized accountability, calling for strict adherence to PSC membership criteria under Article 5(2) and periodic reviews under Article 5(4) to ensure compliance, aiming to restore credibility after past lapses.¹²²

Preventive diplomacy was highlighted as the most cost-effective approach, with calls to revitalize the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), strengthen coordination with regional bodies, and institutionalize a dynamic risk-mapping tool. The PSC also urged mechanisms to address denialism among member states and stressed learning from past early warning assessments to improve timely responses.

On conflict resolution, the Council raised concern over fragmented peace initiatives and the externalization of African conflicts, urging harmonization under AU leadership to reclaim ownership of mediation processes. Key decisions included clearer communication of membership criteria, compliance reviews, mechanisms against denialism, stronger collaboration with AU and regional actors, integration of RECs/RMs into financing frameworks, and the establishment of a continuously updated risk-mapping tool.¹²³

¹²¹ For a detailed analysis, read Amani Africa's Special Research Report prepared to inform the session, 'Re-energizing Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa: A Quest to Salvage the APSA?' 19 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/re-energising-conflict-prevention-and-resolution-in-africa-a-quest-to-salvage-the-apsa/>

¹²² See the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1303rd session, held on 24 September 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1303comm_en.pdf

¹²³ For a detailed analysis of the session, see

Taken together, the PSC's engagements during the review period paint a picture of an APSA that remains normatively robust but operationally constrained. Across peace support operations, preventive diplomacy, security sector reform, early warning, and financing, similar patterns recur: ambitious mandates, incremental progress, and persistent implementation gaps rooted in political reluctance, coordination deficits, and resource constraints. While the ongoing APSA review offers an opportunity to address these challenges, the experience of the review period suggests that institutional reform alone will be insufficient.

Elections and Governance

In 2025, the PSC continued to institutionalise its engagement on elections in Africa through regular consideration of the biannual reports of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Two sessions in particular, the [1255th](#) meeting held on 24 January 2025 and the [1288th](#) meeting held on 4 July 2025, were dedicated to reviewing elections conducted between July and December 2024 and January and June 2025, respectively, as well as providing outlooks for upcoming polls.¹²⁴ While this regularity reflects an important

Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'PSC's Summit-Level Session puts spotlight on AU's role in conflict prevention and resolution', September 2025, Page 9. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/September-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹²⁴ See the Chairperson's reports for both sessions are available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1255-Report-of-the-AUC-Chairperson-2024-2nd-Semester-PSC-Report-on-Elections-in-Africa-NNC-revis.pdf> and <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1288-Election-in-Africa-EN.pdf>

procedural consolidation of elections within the PSC's agenda, the substance of the Council's deliberations once again fell short of providing a rigorous and politically honest assessment of electoral integrity and governance trends on the continent.

The Chairperson's half-year reports reviewed a wide range of electoral processes across Member States, including Algeria, Rwanda, Tunisia, Mozambique, Botswana, Mauritius, Gabon, Senegal, Namibia, Ghana, Chad, Burundi, Comoros, and Gabon.¹²⁵ These elections reflected a mixed picture, combining peaceful democratic consolidation in some contexts with deepening concerns over authoritarian entrenchment, contested transitions, and post-election violence in others. However, the PSC's engagement largely flattened these divergent realities into a cautiously optimistic narrative that prioritised procedural completion of elections over substantive credibility.

In several cases, the Council commended Member States for 'successfully' organising elections, emphasising peaceful voting, high turnout, and increased reliance on domestic resources to finance electoral processes. While such recognition may encourage self-reliance and institutional ownership, it also risks legitimising flawed electoral processes where structural inequities, political repression, or manipulation of legal frameworks undermine democratic

¹²⁵ For more see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, '[Consideration of the half-year Report of the Chairperson of the commission on elections in Africa: July to December 2024 and Outlook for 2025](#)', 23 January 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/consideration-of-the-half-year-report-of-the-chairperson-of-the-commission-on-elections-in-africa-july-to-december-2024-and-outlook-2025/>

choice.

The PSC's approach to elections in post-coup transitions reveals a gap between its stated norms and actual practice. In cases such as Gabon and Chad, the Council avoided confronting or ultimately legitimised electoral processes that allowed coup leaders or transitional authorities to contest elections, despite clear AU rules prohibiting this. Similar ambiguity is evident in Guinea, where the PSC expressed optimism about elections without reaffirming key normative restrictions. These cases highlight a broader governance challenge: the selective and inconsistent application of AU norms, political accommodation in sensitive contexts, and the gradual weakening of the PSC's "zero tolerance" stance on unconstitutional changes of government.¹²⁶

Equally concerning is the PSC's persistent failure to treat elections as a core early warning and conflict prevention tool. Despite explicit recognition in both sessions of the need to strengthen preventive diplomacy and early warning mechanisms, the Council avoided

¹²⁶ For a further analysis on AU's anti-coup norms read Amani Africa's Ideas Indaba pieces 'Can AU's anti-coup norm survive a scenario in which the military leaders of all suspended countries run for elections following the precedent in Chad and Gabon?', 10 April 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/can-aus-anti-coup-norm-survive-a-scenario-in-which-the-military-leaders-of-all-suspended-countries-run-for-elections-following-the-precedent-in-chad-and-gabon/> 'Coup d'état continues to surge as the African Union and regional bodies inadvertently make coup-making profitable again', 24 December 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/coup-detat-continues-to-surge-as-the-african-union-and-regional-bodies-inadvertently-make-coup-making-profitable-again/>

addressing clear and documented election-related crises. Mozambique's 2024 elections, marked by allegations of fraud, post-election violence, and targeted assassinations, received no substantive attention in the PSC communiqué, which instead commended Member States for managing election results and preventing violence. This dissonance between reality and Council pronouncements underscores the performative nature of the PSC's engagement on elections, where difficult governance issues are systematically sidestepped.

A similar pattern emerged in the Council's treatment of upcoming elections that took place for the second half of 2025. While the PSC identified numerous forthcoming polls in politically fragile contexts, including Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Tanzania it refrained from acknowledging pre-election warning signs such as exclusion of opposition candidates, constitutional crises, institutional fragility, and heightened risks of violence.¹²⁷ The omission of these concerns from PSC outcomes, despite being clearly flagged by independent analyses and civil society actors, reflects a missed opportunity to deploy preventive diplomacy in a timely and targeted manner.

The PSC has repeatedly called for the pairing of election observation with preventive diplomacy missions, enhanced coordination with RECs/RMs, **and strengthened** use of the Continental

¹²⁷ For a detailed analysis, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Consideration of the AU Commission Report on Elections in Africa for the Period of January to June 2025', 3 July 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/consideration-of-the-au-commission-report-on-elections-in-africa-for-the-period-of-jan-june-2025/>

Early Warning System. However, these calls have yet to translate into concrete, proactive interventions. Election observation continues to be treated largely as a technical exercise focused on election day processes, rather than as part of a broader political strategy to safeguard electoral integrity throughout the electoral cycle. Moreover, the PSC's encouragement of Member States to invite AU Election Observation Missions, while normatively sound, remains insufficient in cases where governments deliberately restrict observation or manipulate legal frameworks to preclude genuine competition.

Humanitarian Crisis and Action

The [1286th](#) open session on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa held on 1 July and the [1307th](#) session for the Briefing of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) held on 24 October, provide a revealing snapshot of the continent's deepening humanitarian crisis and the Council's evolving, yet still constrained, response. Together, the two sessions reflect a growing awareness of the scale, complexity, and interconnectedness of humanitarian, legal, climatic, and technological challenges, while also exposing persistent gaps between normative ambition and operational delivery.

The 1286th session unfolded against a backdrop of unprecedented humanitarian need, marked by mass displacement, notably in Sudan, severe funding shortfalls, and increasingly restricted humanitarian access.¹²⁸ The PSC acknowledged what

¹²⁸ For a detailed analysis of the humanitarian situation, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Open Session on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa', 30 June 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/open-session-on-the-humanitarian-situation-in->

it described as a 'triple challenge': worsening crises, shrinking global solidarity, and constrained humanitarian space. In response, the Council called for predictable, adequate, and flexible international financing, particularly for countries hosting large refugee and IDP populations. However, this appeal appeared misaligned with the structural shift in global development assistance, where donor retrenchment has become a reality rather than an anomaly. The Council's repeated reliance on appeals to external partners, coupled with renewed requests for studies on financing gaps, underscored a reactive posture that risks delaying urgently needed action.

The July session also exposed the Council's caution in confronting politically sensitive issues. While the PSC emphasised the importance of unhindered humanitarian access and civilian protection, it stopped short of explicitly characterising access restrictions as grave violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). This reluctance contrasted sharply with briefers' warnings about catastrophic consequences of inaction. At the same time, the Council endorsed anticipatory action, early warning, and climate-resilient infrastructure, and reiterated long-standing calls for the appointment of a Special Envoy on Climate Change and Security, an issue first raised in 2018 but still unrealised. Institutionally, the PSC again urged the expedited operationalisation of the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA) and the AU Civilian Capacity Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response.

[africa/](#) And Briefing of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on its activities and the Humanitarian Situation in Africa, 23 October 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-by-the-international-committee-for-the-red-cross-icrc-on-its-activities-and-the-humanitarian-situation-in-africa/>

reflecting chronic implementation delays within the AU's humanitarian architecture.

The [1307th](#) session built on these concerns but shifted the emphasis toward normative consolidation and emerging risks. Briefed by the ICRC, the PSC adopted a more explicit tone in condemning violations of IHL and IHRL, including attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers, and medical infrastructure. It welcomed the ICRC's Global Initiative on IHL and urged AU Member States to strengthen domestic legal protections for healthcare and humanitarian personnel, in line with UNSC Resolution 2664. Importantly, the Council elevated the discussion beyond immediate humanitarian access to address the future of warfare, calling for the expedited development of a Common African Position on IHL and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in warfare. This reflects growing concern over autonomous weapons and digital technologies, yet the absence of timelines and enforcement mechanisms raises questions about the practical impact of this initiative.

Across both sessions, climate change emerged as a cross-cutting driver of humanitarian vulnerability and displacement. The PSC recognised the climate–conflict–displacement nexus and called for climate-sensitive humanitarian strategies, early warning, and preparedness. However, as with financing and institutional reform, these calls were not accompanied by clear benchmarks or resource commitments. The Council also stressed the need for stronger coordination among AU organs, RECs, the ICRC/IFRC, UN agencies, and humanitarian actors, acknowledging that fragmentation continues to undermine response effectiveness.

From an actionable standpoint, the two sessions made follow-up decisions: expediting the operationalisation and sustainable financing of the African humanitarian Agency (AfHA); conducting comprehensive studies on humanitarian financing shortfalls; developing a dashboard of external humanitarian assistance; appointing a Special Envoy on Climate Change and Security; establishing a humanitarian platform for best practices; and fast-tracking a Common African Position on IHL and AI in warfare alongside an AU Humanitarian Diplomacy Framework. Yet, the repetition of these decisions across multiple sessions highlights a persistent implementation deficit. Without clear timelines, accountability mechanisms, and political prioritisation, the PSC risks normalising crisis management through statements rather than delivering a decisive, African-owned humanitarian response commensurate with the scale and complexity of current and future crises.¹²⁹

Violent Extremism and Organized Crimes

The PSC devoted two sessions to the evolving threat of terrorism and organized crimes. The deliberations during the sessions reflect growing concern about the scale, complexity, and interconnected nature of Africa's security threats, while also exposing persistent gaps between normative commitments and operational follow-through. Notably, through the [1266th](#) session held on 19 March under the

¹²⁹ See communiqués adopted by the PSC at its 1286th session, held on 1 July 2025. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1286-comm_en.pdf. And 1307th session, held on 24 October 2025. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1307-comm_en.pdf

them ‘*Deradicalisation as a Leverage for the Fight against Violent Extremism in Africa*’, the Council acknowledged the alarming surge in terrorist activities and reaffirmed deradicalisation as a critical preventive tool. However, the session largely reiterated earlier positions, particularly those adopted at the landmark 1111th session in 2022, without introducing new strategic directions or implementation pathways. Despite renewed calls to integrate counter-radicalisation measures into the African Plan of Action on Terrorism and Violent Extremism, leverage national best practices, regularly review AU counterterrorism legal frameworks, and strengthen early warning through ACSRT and CISSA, the communiqué fell short of translating these priorities into concrete, time-bound actions. The absence of diverse non-state actors, notably religious institutions that previously enriched deliberations, further limited the session’s practical value. As such, while the PSC continues to endorse a comprehensive approach combining ideological, technological, communicative, and security responses, progress remains constrained by repetition, weak follow-up, and limited political commitment to operationalise past decisions.

In contrast, the PSC’s engagement on transnational organised crime (TOC) at its 1279th session held on 14 May 2025 demonstrated a more action-oriented posture, particularly in recognising TOC as both a driver and beneficiary of governance deficits, insecurity, and socio-economic vulnerabilities in the Sahel. The Council underscored how illicit trafficking corridors sustain armed groups and exacerbate instability, thereby reinforcing the terrorism–crime nexus. Importantly, the PSC advanced more concrete

institutional responses by recommending the establishment of a continental criminal intelligence mechanism anchored by AFRIPOL, building on earlier decisions from its 1082nd session. Key actionable decisions included tasking the AU Commission to coordinate with AFRIPOL, INTERPOL, UNODC and others to develop corridor-specific responses, deploy joint mobile and surveillance units, and prioritise efforts to disrupt the financing of organised crime. The Council also took note of tangible progress within AFRIPOL, including the operationalisation of AFSECOM, the Central Criminal Intelligence Analysis Unit, and regional forensic centres, while requesting due process for adopting AFRIPOL’s new structure. Collectively, these decisions signal a shift toward intelligence-led, coordinated, and operationally grounded responses to TOC.¹³⁰

Climate, Peace and Security

In 2025, the PSC continued to underscore the critical nexus between climate change, peace, and security at its two substantive sessions on the theme, notably its 1263rd meeting of 6 March and its 1301st meeting of 17 September. During its 1263rd session, themed “Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa,”¹³¹ the

¹³⁰ See Paragraph 12, 18 and 19 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1279th session, held on 14 May 2025. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1279-comm_en.pdf

¹³¹ For more detailed analysis on climate related challenges to peace and security in Africa and the Climate, Peace and Security nexus, see Amani Africa Insights of the PSC, ‘Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security Challenges in Africa’, 5 March 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/climate-change-challenges-to-peace-and-security-in-africa/> And Open session on the ‘Nexus between Climate Change, Peace

Council highlighted the urgent need to mainstream climate considerations into peace and security frameworks, strengthen African-led adaptation solutions, and enhance resource mobilisation. The session emphasised integrating environmental and climate dimensions, particularly agricultural adaptation, into strategies promoting peace, security, and development, while incorporating climate-conflict indicators into early warning systems. Recognising that preparedness begins with Member States, the PSC called for improved communication on climate phenomena, disaster preparedness, and risk reduction across local, national, regional, and continental levels. The Council further encouraged South-South cooperation, digital adaptation tools such as the African Agriculture Adaptation Tracking Tool, and the sharing of best practices to enhance collective capacity for climate resilience.

Financing and just transition emerged as central concerns, with the PSC reiterating the need to mobilise sustainable climate finance to address adaptation gaps, loss and damage, and support vulnerable populations. It welcomed the adoption at COP29 of the \$300 billion annual climate finance target by 2035 and the operationalisation of carbon markets under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, while urging swift implementation of these decisions in light of historical shortfalls. The Council further highlighted the importance of investments in agricultural adaptation and sustainable resource management as key elements linking climate action to

and Security in Africa,' 16 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/open-session-on-the-nexus-between-climate-change-peace-and-security-in-africa/>

peace and security outcomes. To advance policy coherence, the PSC requested the AU Commission to expedite the finalisation of the study on the climate-conflict nexus and the Common African Position (CAP) on Climate, Peace and Security, emphasising due process and the inclusion of inputs from all Member States, the African Group of Negotiators, and Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs/RMs).¹³² Additionally, the AU Commission was tasked with strengthening collaboration with initiatives and centres of excellence, including the African Agriculture Adaptation Initiative (AAA), the African Security, Stability and Sustainability (SSS) Initiative, the Sahel, Island States, and Congo Basin Climate Commissions, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), CRSP, and AUDA-NEPAD, while mobilising resources for continental capacity building on climate adaptation and resilience.¹³³

The 1301st session on 17 September 2025 reaffirmed the PSC's commitment to integrating climate, peace, and security within wider climate policy frameworks, stressing that climate change acts as a "risk multiplier" rather than a direct cause of conflict. Both briefings of Amani Africa¹³⁴ and the AU Commission highlighted the uneven impact of climate shocks on vulnerable populations and emphasised governance and adaptation mechanisms as decisive in determining whether climate-related stress translates

¹³² See Paragraph 12 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1263rd session, held on 6 March 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1263.comm-en.pdf>

¹³³ Ibid. (see Paragraph 7)

¹³⁴ Find the briefing, 'Amani Africa briefing to the Peace and security Council', 17 September 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/amani-africa-briefing-to-the-peace-and-security-council/>

into cooperation or conflict.

The adopted communiqué incorporated several key themes from Amani Africa's briefing, including the need to meet climate finance targets, uphold Article 3(5) of the UNFCCC on a supportive and open international economic system, integrate climate indicators into early warning mechanisms, and recognise mobility and transhumance as legitimate adaptation strategies.¹³⁵ These elements reflect an effort to situate climate–security engagement within wider global and continental climate governance processes.

Member States voiced concerns over the potential securitisation of climate action, cautioning against shifting responsibility for climate impacts from major emitters to the most affected countries. In response, the PSC maintained a nuanced approach, linking climate, peace, and security while recognising broader development imperatives. The Council further stressed early warning and preparedness, integrating climate indicators into existing systems to ensure that climate risks inform timely peace and security interventions. It reaffirmed Africa's common position on climate finance, calling for the implementation of COP29 commitments and adherence to UNFCCC Article 3(5) to prevent unilateral trade measures that could undermine sustainable development and climate action.

The actionable decisions from the 1301st PSC session includes PSC's reiteration

¹³⁵ See the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1301st session, held on 20 February 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1301.comm.en.pdf>

of the call for the AU Commission to expeditiously finalise the CAP on Climate, Peace and Security in consultation with Member States, ensuring ownership and alignment with broader climate and resilience frameworks. The PSC also requested the AU Commission to strengthen collaboration with Member States, RECs/RMs, centres of excellence, civil society, and international partners to scale up climate security action, mobilise necessary resources, and enhance continental capacities for anticipating, preventing, and managing climate-related security challenges. These decisions reflect a clear mandate for operationalising the climate-security nexus while situating Africa's approach within global climate justice debates and reinforcing the role of adaptation, governance, and inclusivity as central pillars of continental resilience.

PSC Sessions on Specific Groups

The PSC devoted sustained attention to the protection and participation of specific groups disproportionately affected by conflict, notably children, women, youth and learners in conflict situations. These sessions collectively reflect the Council's gradual shift towards a more people-centred interpretation of peace and security, aligned with Agenda 2063, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agendas. Within this framework, the PSC emphasized the need to integrate child protection concerns into national, regional and continental early warning systems.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ See Paragraph 7 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1262nd session, held on 20 February 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1262.comm.en.pdf>

PSC's deliberations on **Children Affected by Armed Conflict**, most notably during the [1262nd](#) (20 February 2025), [1290th](#) (22 July 2025) and [1314th](#) (21 November 2025) sessions, have been characterised by a strong and consistent normative stance against the recruitment and use of children by both state and non-state actors, framing such practices as grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Across several sessions, the Council has repeatedly emphasised accountability, ratification and domestication of relevant instruments, and the principle that children associated with armed forces and armed groups should be treated as victims rather than offenders. This position was reaffirmed at the 1290th session, where the PSC urged that children formerly associated with armed groups be treated as victims in line with international law.¹³⁷

Substantively, the PSC has increasingly acknowledged the multidimensional harms experienced by conflict-affected children, including psychosocial trauma, stigma, disrupted education and heightened risks of re-recruitment. These discussions have translated into calls for holistic, gender-sensitive and community-based reintegration programmes, alongside the provision of education, healthcare and psychosocial support as integral components of peacebuilding. In this regard, the PSC urged the AU Commission to expedite the development of a Continental Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework for children affected by

armed conflict.¹³⁸ The Council's insistence on mainstreaming child protection across mediation, peace processes, DDR, SSR and post-conflict reconstruction reflects an emerging understanding that child protection is central, rather than peripheral, to sustainable peace.

Despite this normative clarity, implementation remains uneven. Key commitments, such as operationalising the AU Child Protection Architecture, developing a Continental Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework, and appointing a Special Envoy on Children in Conflict have been reiterated across sessions without meaningful progress. The repetition of these requests points to structural challenges of political will, capacity and prioritisation. Moreover, while prevention is acknowledged rhetorically, PSC engagement continues to privilege response and rehabilitation over upstream strategies that address root causes such as poverty, exclusion, weak governance and protracted conflict economies.

During both the 1290th and 1262nd sessions, the PSC requested for the appointment of a Special Envoy for Children Affected by Armed Conflicts in Africa. Furthermore, the council requested for enhanced monitoring of children in conflict situations, the establishment of an Africa-centred knowledge platform on child protection, and the fast-tracking by the ACERWC of a continental study on child soldiers.¹³⁹

The PSC considered WPS during the 1268th session of 21 March 2025 and the commemorative [1309th](#) session of 30

¹³⁷ See Paragraph 15 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1290th session, held on 22 July 2025. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1290.1.comm-en.pdf>

¹³⁸ See Paragraph 6 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1262nd

¹³⁹ Ibid. See Paragraph 13 & 14.

October 2025. Council discussions reflect an expansive normative and institutional architecture, including the Continental Results Framework, FemWise-Africa and the Office of the Special Envoy on WPS. The PSC has consistently condemned conflict-related sexual violence, reaffirmed zero tolerance for impunity and encouraged the adoption of National Action Plans to localise the WPS agenda.¹⁴⁰

Yet, the central analytical tension remains the persistent gap between commitments and lived realities. Despite extensive frameworks, women continue to face systematic exclusion from formal peace processes and acute vulnerability in active conflict theatres such as Sudan, the Sahel and eastern DRC. PSC outcomes frequently reiterate normative commitments without sufficiently interrogating the structural and political reasons behind weak implementation or reflecting critically on protection and participation failures within AU-led or supported processes.

The most significant outcome from the Sessions on WPS was the call for independent civil society shadow reports under the Continental Results Framework that was made during its 1309th session,¹⁴¹ signalling an emerging willingness to strengthen transparency and accountability. If operationalised, this mechanism could elevate grassroots perspectives and expose discrepancies

¹⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of the implementation of the WPS agenda see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Women, Peace and Security in Africa: 25 years of UNSCR 1325', 29 October 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/women-peace-and-security-in-africa-25-years-of-uns-cr-1325/>

¹⁴¹ See Paragraph 9 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1309th session, held on 30 October 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1309.press_stat_en.pdf

between official reporting and realities on the ground. However, its effectiveness will depend on political space at the national level, the protection of civil society actors and the PSC's readiness to engage meaningfully with critical findings.

Financing remains a structural constraint. While the PSC recognises the need for predictable resources for WPS institutions, including the OSE-WPS,¹⁴² commitments fall short of ring-fenced allocations or binding budgetary decisions. As a result, institutional sustainability continues to rely heavily on external partners, undermining ownership and long-term impact.

The other engagement of the PSC was on migration, **Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)**, during its 1310th meeting of 11 November 2025. The Council highlighted how chronic governance and development deficits are driving youth migration and intersecting with peace and security challenges such as unemployment, marginalisation, organised crime, and terrorism. While the session acknowledged the growing centrality of migration within the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda and expressed support to the outcomes of the 2023 Continental Youth Consultation on Migration, the adopted Press Statement¹⁴³ remained largely descriptive and fell short of fully situating youth migration within broader dynamics of political participation, legitimacy crises,

¹⁴² Ibid. See Paragraph 20. The PSC 'requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to reinforce the institutional capacity of the OSE-WPS through adequate and predictable financing, including from the AU regular budget'.

¹⁴³ Press Statement adopted by the PSC at its 1310th session, held on 11 November 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1310.press_stat_en.pdf

youth-led protests, and climate-induced displacement.

The Council advanced several operational priorities aimed at translating the agenda into practice. It called for the integration of youth and migration indicators into the AU Continental Early Warning System, greater attention to migration within YPS programming, and investments in youth mobility through a dedicated **Youth Mobility Fund**. The PSC further urged scaled-up financing for YPS National Action Plans (NAPs) and the urgent funding and operationalisation of AU migration governance structures in Bamako, Khartoum, and Rabat, while reaffirming commitments to the protection of migrants' human rights and youth-centred repatriation, reintegration, and psychosocial support.

The session reiterated earlier decisions calling for the appointment of an AU Special Envoy on Migration, requested the urgent submission of the AU Guidelines on the Development and Implementation of YPS NAPs, and underlined the need to reactivate the AU–UN–EU Tripartite Task Force on Migration in Libya, with reporting back to the Council. Most significantly, the PSC tasked the **Chairperson of the AU Commission to commission a comprehensive study on migration, youth, peace and security in Africa**, aimed at generating evidence-based policy options and improving coordination in addressing irregular migration within the YPS framework. However, the absence of timelines, accountability mechanisms, and explicit linkages to climate change and governance reforms underscores a continuing implementation gap that risks limiting the transformative impact of these decisions.

Artificial Intelligence

At its 1267th ministerial session, held on 20 March, the PSC advanced a holistic agenda on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its role in peace and security. Building on earlier initiatives, the Council welcomed the establishment of the AU Advisory Group on AI and emphasized mainstreaming AI into peacekeeping operations, early warning systems, and inclusive development. It requested the AU Commission to design integrated AI-based tools to detect radicalisation, community violence, and emerging conflicts, while also setting up a monitoring mechanism, such as an AU Watch Centre, to track global and regional AI trends. Raising awareness of risks, particularly military AI misuse by non-state actors, was highlighted as a priority. The PSC further stressed the urgent need for an African regulatory framework aligned with international standards but tailored to continental realities. It tasked the AU Commission to elaborate an African Common Position on AI, draft an African Charter on AI with a dedicated section on peaceful applications, and provide regular updates to the Council. Member States were urged to ratify the AU Convention on Cyber Security and adopt national legislation and strategies consistent with continental frameworks. To strengthen capacity, the PSC called for training programs to nurture African AI talent, the creation of national AI centers, and the establishment of an African Fund on AI to support infrastructure and startups. It also proposed convening an African forum to share best practices and strategies for governance and security.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ See Paragraph 3, 4, 10, 13, 14 and 15 of the Communiqué adopted by the PSC at its 1267th session, held on 20 March 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1267_comm_en.pdf

Despite these forwardlooking measures, the communiqué overlooked existing AU instruments such as the Continental AI Strategy, African Digital Compact, and AUNEPAD white paper, as well as disparities in infrastructure and technical capacity among Member States. Previous PSC decisions calling for comprehensive studies on AI's impact, ethical military use, and biannual reporting remain pending, raising concerns about followup and coherence.¹⁴⁵

Prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa

In line with its standing decision to anchor April sessions around the prevention of genocide, hate crimes and genocidal ideology, the PSC convened its 1258th session on 31 January 2025 to commemorate the Third Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation, followed by its [1272nd](#) open session on 2 April dedicated to hate crimes and fighting genocidal ideology in Africa. Together, these sessions reaffirmed the Council's long-standing normative commitment to remembrance, reconciliation and prevention, situating them within broader conflict-prevention and social cohesion frameworks. The PSC underscored values such as tolerance, justice, forgiveness, inclusive governance and restorative justice, while emphasising civic education, peace education, intergenerational dialogue and the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. It also reiterated calls for accountability, the fight against impunity,

¹⁴⁵ For a detailed analysis of the session, see Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'PSC outlines a holistic

agenda on artificial intelligence that needs to build on previous PSC products and other AU initiatives', March 2025, Page 10 – 13. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/March-monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

media responsibility in countering incitement, and strengthened early warning, particularly through enhanced cyber capabilities within the Continental Early Warning System to detect online hate speech and disinformation.¹⁴⁶ These deliberations reinforced the importance of embedding reconciliation and prevention within national and regional frameworks and acknowledged the enduring relevance of the lessons of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

The outcome documents largely recycled previous pronouncements, such as calls for a review of the implementation of the OAU Panel of Eminent Personalities' recommendations, the establishment of a continental research centre on hate speech and genocidal ideology, and stronger preventive frameworks, without providing concrete roadmaps, timelines or accountability mechanisms. Moreover, the sessions remained largely abstract and commemorative, making limited reference to ongoing conflict situations and contemporary manifestations of atrocity risks across the continent, despite clear warnings from the AU Special Envoy on Genocide and Mass Atrocities about their prevalence. This silence risks rendering the Council's engagement performative rather than preventive, reinforcing a persistent disconnect between PSC deliberations and evolving conflict realities. As such, while the sessions reaffirmed important normative commitments, they also underscored the need for a strategic course correction that translates remembrance and prevention

¹⁴⁶ See Paragraph 10 & 11 of the Press Statement released following the 1272nd session of the PSC, held on 2 April 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1272.press_stat_en.pdf

rhetoric into context-specific, actionable and forward-looking measures capable of addressing real-time risks of hate-driven violence and mass atrocities in Africa.

Other Thematic Issues

The PSC's engagements under 'other themes' during the review period reflect an expanding recognition of non-traditional yet structurally significant drivers of insecurity in Africa, notably illicit arms proliferation, explosive weapons, and information ecosystems. At its 1281st session (4 June 2025), the Council's focus on synergies between African regional arms control instruments and the Global Framework on Ammunition (GFA) signalled a deliberate effort to align continental norms with evolving global governance processes. The session demonstrated a preventive orientation by emphasising stockpile management, emergency preparedness, and national control mechanisms to address ammunition diversion, accidents and theft. Importantly, the PSC acknowledged the need to update legal and institutional frameworks to respond to new and emerging weapons technologies, while introducing a gender lens into arms and ammunition management, an area traditionally treated as gender-neutral. However, the largely technical framing of the discussion, coupled with the voluntary nature of the GFA, highlights the continued reliance on political commitment rather than enforceable compliance mechanisms, raising questions about implementation effectiveness in contexts of weak state capacity.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ For a detailed analysis on the session, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Briefing on the synergy between the Global Framework Ammunition (GFA) Management and the Regional Arms and Ammunition Control Instruments'; 3

The Council's 1271st session (1 April 2025) on Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action further underscored the humanitarian and civilian protection dimensions of Africa's peace and security agenda. While welcoming progress made by Member States that have declared themselves mine-free, the PSC expressed concern over the persistence and in some cases re-emergence of landmines, Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), particularly in conflict-affected and urbanised settings such as Sudan and the DRC. The session importantly elevated the risks posed by Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), yet stopped short of articulating a firm normative position against their use, opting instead for cautious language that encourages limitation rather than prohibition. This reflects a recurring tension in PSC outcomes between humanitarian protection imperatives and political sensitivities of Member States engaged in active conflicts. Moreover, while the renewed call for a continental mine action mechanism and updated AU strategies is significant, the absence of clarity on sustainable financing, especially amid declining donor support, exposes a structural vulnerability in Africa's mine action architecture.¹⁴⁸

June 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-synergy-between-the-global-framework-ammunition-gfa-management-and-the-regional-arms-and-ammunition-control-instruments/> and Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'Proliferation and trafficking in SALW pose a continuing threat, the PSC', June 2025, Page 1 -3. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/June-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ For a detailed analysis on the session, see Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, 'AU expresses deep concern as Africa faces growing challenges for mine action', 2 June 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/au-expresses-deep-concern-as->

The PSC's 131th session on Media, Peace and Security marked a qualitative shift by explicitly positioning media and communication as cross-cutting enablers within APSA and AGA. Moving beyond issue-specific or thematic engagement, the Council recognised information integrity, journalist safety, and narrative governance as central to conflict prevention, early warning and peacebuilding. The session demonstrated continuity by condemning attacks against journalists and endorsing the establishment of an AU Group of Friends for the Safety of Journalists, addressing a previously identified institutional gap. At the same time, it broke new ground by highlighting AI-facilitated gender-based violence against women journalists and by proposing ambitious continental initiatives, including a Media Regulatory Framework, Observatory and AU Media House. Yet, as with other PSC engagements, these proposals suffer from a lack of operational clarity, institutional anchoring and alignment with existing AU digital governance initiatives. Collectively, these "other themes" sessions reveal a Council increasingly attentive to the structural, humanitarian and informational dimensions of conflict, but still constrained by weak follow-through, financing gaps and an enduring gap between normative ambition and operational delivery.¹⁴⁹

[africa-faces-growing-challenges-for-mine-action/](#)

149 For a detailed analysis, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Media, Peace and Security', 13 November 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/media-peace-and-security/> and Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'Condemning violence against journalists, the PSC calls for investigation and prosecution of such violence', November 2025, pp 4-6. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/November-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

3.4. Consultative meetings and other engagements

In 2025, the PSC continued to rely on consultative meetings as a tool for advancing coordination, coherence and collective action across Africa's peace, security, governance and peacebuilding landscape. The PSC's Annual Programme of Work for 2025 envisaged a comprehensive set of consultative meetings; however, implementation of the consultative agenda in 2025 was uneven. While the PSC succeeded in convening several high-profile and politically salient engagements, most notably with ECOWAS, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the AGA-APSA Platform, the UN Security Council (UNSC), the UN Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC), the European Union Political and Security Committee (EUPSC), and the APRM, a significant number of consultations foreseen in the Programme of Work did not take place. These included meetings with the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, ECOSOCC and civil society organisations, as well as the annual consultative meeting with the RECs/RMs Policy Organs.

Notably, while the Annual Programme of Work anticipated a fourth annual consultative meeting with the RECs/RMs Policy Organs as a collective forum, similar to the previous year, this did not materialise. Instead, the PSC opted for bilateral engagements with specific REC policy organs, particularly ECOWAS. While these targeted engagements allowed for more context-specific and politically focused discussions, particularly on terrorism and governance crises in West Africa, they did not substitute for a structured continental-level dialogue on subsidiarity, division of labour and

coordination across all RECs/RMs. The 2nd consultation with SADC was scheduled in August, but it did not take place.

Similarly, although the Programme of Work envisaged consultations with ECOSOCC and civil society organisations in July 2025, as well as engagements with the African Court, these did not occur. This further limited opportunities to systematically integrate civic space, social accountability and people-centred peacebuilding into the PSC's deliberations. The omission of these engagements is particularly notable given the PSC's recurring rhetorical emphasis on inclusive, people-centred and prevention-oriented approaches to peace and security.

Joint Consultative Meeting between AU PSC and APRM

The Fourth Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC and African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) took place on 7 and 8 April 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Following the consultation, the PSC convened its 1274th session on 16 April to consider and adopt the outcome of the Consultative Meeting.¹⁵⁰ The communiqué adopted by session endorsed the conclusions of the joint retreat under the theme of enhancing the APRM's role in early warning, conflict prevention and good governance, in accordance with AU normative instruments.

The communiqué reaffirms the sustained collaboration between the PSC and the APRM, building on previous joint

retreats¹⁵¹ and aligning with AU Assembly Decision 686 (XXX) of 2018¹⁵², which calls for enhancing the APRM's early warning mandate in support of initiatives such as Silencing the Guns.

However, the communiqué is limited by its lack of specificity, as it endorses the retreat's conclusions without outlining concrete recommendations, action points, timelines, or resource commitments, raising concerns about effective implementation and transparency. Strengthening future outcomes would require clearer action plans, stronger accountability mechanisms, and broader stakeholder engagement, particularly with the Continental Early Warning System and RECs/RMs. The PSC requested the AU Commission and the APRM Continental Secretariat to ensure implementation of the conclusions and report back at the next PSC–APRM Joint Retreat.

PSC meeting with AGA/APSA Platform

At its 1295th meeting on 8 August 2025, the PSC held consultations with the AGA/APSA Platform and the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance. This engagement marked an effort to address long-standing fragmentation between Africa's governance and security architectures.

¹⁵¹ See the Communiqué adopted by the 1191st meeting that considered the Conclusions of the Third Joint Retreat of the PSC of the AU and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), 17 January 2024. Available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/1191-comm-en-2024.pdf>

¹⁵² See African Union, 'Decision on the Report of the African Peer Review Mechanism', 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, 28- 29 January 2018, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Available at: https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/33908-assembly_decisions_665_-_689_e.pdf

¹⁵⁰ African Union Commission, '4th Joint retreat of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the African Peer Review Mechanism', PSC/APRM/ Retreat.4 (2025), 7 – 8 April 2025. Available at: https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1274-conclusions_en.pdf

The communiqué¹⁵³ emphasised the need for stronger alignment and coordination between governance, human rights, peace and security frameworks to enable more coherent responses to multidimensional crises. A key outcome was the call for the development of a Joint Roadmap to harmonise initiatives, reduce duplication and clarify mandates across AU organs.

PSC meeting with the Pan-African Parliament

From 17–18 July, the PSC and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) convened an annual Joint Consultative Meeting at PAP Headquarters in Midrand under the theme of ‘enhancing institutional synergy and collaboration for sustainable peace and security’, with the Joint Conclusions adopted at the PSC’s 1290th meeting on 22 July.¹⁵⁴ The consultations addressed two interlinked pillars: the evolving peace and security landscape and the state of democratic governance in Africa. Discussions highlighted persistent

¹⁵³ See the communiqué adopted by the 1295th session of the PSC on the Consultation of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) with African Governance Architecture (AGA) and Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Platform/Human Rights Subcommittee, 8 August 2025. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1295_comm_en.pdf

¹⁵⁴ See the conclusions of the inaugural joint consultative meeting between the peace and security council of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament, 17–18 July 2025 Midrand, South Africa. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-Adopted-Conclusions-PSC-PAP-Consultative-Meeting-17-18-July-2025_EN.pdf and the Communiqué adopted by the 1290th session, on Consideration of the Conclusions of the Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC of the AU and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), 22 July 2025. Available at: https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1290comm_en.pdf

and emerging challenges, including protracted conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan and the Great Lakes region, the Sahel’s growing centrality as the epicentre of terrorism, and the compounding effects of geopolitical shifts, climate change, youth unemployment and governance deficits.

The meeting also underscored the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and PAP’s role in translating continental decisions into action at the national level, supporting early warning through its grassroots linkages, and advocating for democratic governance and accountability. A dedicated session focused on amplifying Africa’s voice in global governance reform, reaffirming AU positions on UN Security Council reform in line with the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, enhanced AU engagement in the G20, reform of the global financial and tax architecture, debt relief, climate justice, and reparations for historical injustices.

PSC–ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council

The Second Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC and the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC), held on 16 May 2025, marking the only REC-level engagements of the year. The meeting reaffirmed the primacy of the PSC in matters of continental peace and security, while recalling the legal and policy frameworks governing AU–REC cooperation. Deliberations focused heavily on the deteriorating security situation in West Africa, particularly the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel and the risk of spillover into coastal states. Governance deficits, unconstitutional changes of government

and the slow pace of political transitions in several countries were also central themes. Despite acknowledging specific governance challenges in the region, the Joint Communiqué largely relied on generic calls for adherence to AU and ECOWAS norms, reflecting a persistent reluctance to confront governance failures with tailored and enforceable measures.¹⁵⁵

A key outcome of the meeting was the decision to develop an AU–ECOWAS security cooperation framework to guide engagement with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. This marked a notable shift toward acknowledging the need for structured engagement with the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES), particularly in addressing terrorism and insecurity. The two Councils also emphasised the reinvigoration of existing mechanisms, including the Nouakchott Process, the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Action Plan, the Accra Initiative and the Multinational Joint Task Force. The communiqué further called for strengthened synergy between CEWS and ECOWARN through joint scenario planning, data exchange and rapid response mechanisms, highlighted the importance of scaling up domestic resource mobilisation through innovative approaches and engagement with the private sector and continental financial actors, and underscored the need to address exogenous drivers of insecurity such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the use of UAVs, and the involvement of mercenaries and foreign

¹⁵⁵ See the Joint Communiqué 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting Between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Mediation and Security Council of the Economic Community of West African States, 16 May, Addis Ababa. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2nd-Comm.AUPSC-ECOWAS-MS-2nd-AJCM-EN.pdf>

fighters.

Despite these commitments, the consultation exposed significant implementation gaps. The decision to pursue a security cooperation framework with AES states came after years of escalating violence, raising questions about institutional proactiveness. Moreover, the absence of a high-level AU envoy or dedicated mediation mechanism limited the feasibility of rebuilding trust with the Sahelian states. Resource mobilisation commitments also remained vague, with repeated references to innovative financing mechanisms unaccompanied by concrete proposals or institutional arrangements.¹⁵⁶

PSC meeting with the UN Security Council: cooperation under strain

The PSC's engagement with the UN Security Council in October 2025, comprising the 10th informal joint seminar and the 19th annual consultative meeting, underscored the growing strain in AU–UN peace and security cooperation. Despite substantive discussions on AU-led peace support operations, the Sahel, Sudan, South Sudan and the Great Lakes region¹⁵⁷,

¹⁵⁶ For a detailed analysis of the consultative meeting, see Amani Africa Ideas Indaba, 'From estrangement to engagement: PSC and ECOWAS MSC call for a cooperation framework for engaging AES States', 9 July 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/from-estrangement-to-engagement-psc-and-ecowas-msc-call-for-a-cooperation-framework-for-engaging-aes-states/> and Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'PSC and ECOWAS MSC called for the AU-ECOWAS security cooperation framework for engaging AES states', May 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/May-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ For more, see Amani Africa Insight on the PSC, 'Annual Joint Informal Seminar and

the engagement failed to produce a substantive joint communiqué.

Disagreements over predictable financing for AU-led missions, particularly the application of UNSC resolution 2719 to AUSSOM, emerged as the principal fault line. Divergent positions on conflict-specific language and broader geopolitical contestation further complicated negotiations. The eventual adoption of a joint press statement, rather than a substantive outcome document, reflected the depth of these disagreements and the limitations of existing consultative mechanisms in bridging normative and political divides.¹⁵⁸

The institutionalization of the Annual PSC and A3+ Consultations

At its 1299th meeting on 29 August, the PSC received a briefing from the African Members of the UN Security Council Plus (A3+), reaffirming the centrality of structured and regular coordination under the Oran Process. Building on commitments reiterated during the 11th Oran Process (2024) and the adoption of the Manual on Modalities for Enhancing Coordination between the PSC and A3+ at its 1289th meeting (July 2025), the PSC decisively elevated PSC–A3+ consultations to a statutory annual activity within its indicative programme. The Council

underscored the A3+’s role as Africa’s collective voice at the UNSC and stressed the need for systematic guidance, joint missions, and strengthened information exchange, including the establishment of informal expert-level platforms and enhanced cooperation between the PSC Committee of Experts and A3+ experts.

To operationalise this framework, the PSC mandated quarterly briefings by the A3+, reinforced monthly consultations between the PSC Troika and the A3+, and called for closer synchronization of the PSC and UNSC Programmes of Work. It further decided that all PSC communiqués on African issues on the UNSC agenda be transmitted to the UN Secretary-General for onward submission to the UNSC as official working documents, thereby strengthening the normative authority of PSC decisions. The Council tasked the AU Commission with developing regular reports on its engagement with the UNSC and the A3+, coordinating the inclusion of a dedicated A3+ chapter in the PSC Annual Report on the State of Peace and Security in Africa, and supporting the full implementation of the coordination Manual. Collectively, these decisions mark a shift from ad hoc engagement to institutionalised, predictable coordination aimed at ensuring coherence, visibility, and impact of African positions within the UNSC.

PSC meeting with the European Union Political and Security Committee

The 16th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC and the EUPSC, held on 9 October 2025 in Brussels, demonstrated both convergence and constraint. The joint communiqué adopted strong language on eastern DRC, condemning the M23 and calling for the

Consultative Meeting between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council, 15 October 2025. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/annual-joint-informal-seminar-and-consultative-meeting-between-the-au-peace-and-security-council-and-the-un-security-council/>

¹⁵⁸ For a detailed analysis, see Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, ‘The PSC–UNSC meeting ended without a substantive outcome document’, October 2025, Page 8. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/October-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

unconditional withdrawal of uninvited foreign armed forces. This marked one of the clearest expressions of AU–EU alignment on the conflict. However, beyond normative condemnation, the consultation revealed gaps in operational follow-up, enforcement mechanisms and coordination among multiple peace initiatives. Discussions on Somalia, Sudan, the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin largely reiterated existing positions, highlighting the challenge of translating shared analysis into sustained joint action.¹⁵⁹

PSC meeting with the UN Peacebuilding Commission

The PSC and the UN Peacebuilding Commission held their 8th Annual Consultative Meeting in Addis Ababa on 17 November, adopting a Joint Statement that reaffirmed voluntary contributions as the primary source of peacebuilding financing, complemented by assessed contributions as a shared responsibility of Member States. The meeting underscored the importance of strengthening AU–UN coordination on peacebuilding, including through closer alignment with AU Peace Fund initiatives, and reaffirmed commitments to the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas, calling for stronger linkages between FemWise-Africa and the PBC Gender Strategy and for targeted youth capacity-building to enhance participation in peacebuilding processes. It also highlighted ongoing peacebuilding efforts in contexts such as South Sudan, the Sahel, the Lake Chad

¹⁵⁹ For a detailed analysis of the consultation, see *Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC*, 'AU and EU condemn M23, call for unconditional withdrawal of uninvited foreign armed forces from the DRC', October 2025, Page 2. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/October-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

Basin and the DRC, while acknowledging persistent challenges related to operational effectiveness and impact.¹⁶⁰

Actionable decisions included agreeing to regularise the sharing of outcomes from annual PSC–UNPBC meetings to improve coordination and working methods; encouraging systematic follow-up of recommendations from previous consultations; underscoring the need for targeted youth capacity-building programmes to support meaningful engagement in peacebuilding; and reaffirming the importance of maintaining regular high-level AU–UN engagements to enhance coherence across peacebuilding initiatives.¹⁶¹

3.5. Other activities

In line with its mandate to enhance Africa's effectiveness and coherence at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in the review period, the PSC first took an institutional step at its 1289th session held on 24 July, which was dedicated to considering and adopting the 'Manual on the Modalities for Enhancing Coordination between the PSC and the African Members of the UNSC (A3)'.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ For a detailed analysis, see *Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC*, 'Voluntary contributions should remain the primary source of funding, AUPSC - UNPBC', November 2025, Page 7. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/November-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹⁶¹ See the Joint Statement adopted by the Eighth annual consultative meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), 17 November 2025, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Available at: <https://amani-africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/8th-Joint-Statement-bw-AUPSC-UNPBC-Nov-2025-EN.pdf>

¹⁶² See the Communique adopted by the 1289th meeting that considered Consideration of

The adoption of the Manual¹⁶³, through a communiqué, consolidated more than a decade of decisions, practices, and guidance emanating from previous PSC meetings and High-Level Seminars (HLS) since 2013. The initiative to develop the Manual itself originated from the 8th High-Level Seminar in December 2021, where participants called for clearer guidelines to strengthen PSC–A3 cooperation. The Manual codifies existing coordination practices, clarifies roles and responsibilities, and establishes structured mechanisms for engagement, including regular briefings, synchronized programs of work, enhanced information sharing, capacity-building for A3 members, and strengthened leadership by the PSC in providing strategic guidance to the A3.

Following this institutional milestone, the Oran Process, through the 12th High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, was held on 1 and 2 December 2025, building upon and giving political and strategic depth to the coordination framework formalized by the PSC. The Seminar assessed the evolving global and continental peace and security landscape, highlighting persistent and emerging threats, such as, terrorism and violent extremism, maritime insecurity, climate-induced shocks, and political instability. Discussions emphasised preventive diplomacy, inclusive governance, and the protection of women and children in

the Draft Manual on the Modalities for Enhancing Coordination Between the PSC and the African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3), 24 July 2025. Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1289comm-en.pdf>

¹⁶³ See the Manual on the Modalities for Enhancing Coordination Between the PSC and the African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3). Available at: <https://amani africa-et.org/wp-content/uploads/Manual-of-Engagement-on-Engagement-between-PSC-and-A3-HLS-EN.pdf>

conflict, while reinforcing the importance of strengthened AU–UN concerted action, particularly on counterterrorism and violent extremism, including addressing root causes through development, justice, resilience, economic inclusion, and investment in youth.

The Seminar also reviewed the evolution and performance of the A3+ since 2013, reaffirming that early coordination, unity, and clear strategic priorities significantly enhance Africa's influence at the UNSC. It underscored the urgency of comprehensive UNSC reform and highlighted the A3+ as Africa's de facto permanent voice in the Council. In this regard, the 12th Oran Process served as a practical testbed for the modalities outlined in the Manual, reinforcing the centrality of structured PSC–A3 coordination, systematic information-sharing, and a strong AUPSC–A3 partnership.

Retreat

The Council held its 17th retreat on the Review of its Working Methods, held on 6–7 November 2025 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Retreat aimed to strengthen the PSC's efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling its peace and security mandate within the frameworks of the APSA and AGA. Key discussions focused on PSC working methods and budget performance (2025) and planning (2026), resulting in extensive recommendations to streamline programmes of work, improve document circulation, enhance coordination with the AU Commission, RECs/RMs and the A3, strengthen early warning and preventive diplomacy, operationalize PSC sub-committees, review the AU sanctions regime, and reinforce accountability, confidentiality, and implementation

tracking of PSC decisions.

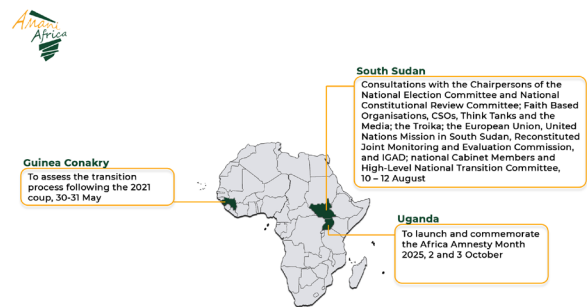
The Retreat also considered the Study on the Structural Root Causes and Impact of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, reaffirming the AU's zero-tolerance policy while calling for a more preventive, early-warning-driven approach. Consideration of the study was deferred to the PSC Committee of Experts for further technical refinement. Additionally, in an open debate on geopolitical shifts and the global governance reset highlighted concerns over great-power competition, declining multilateralism, and reduced partner financing. The PSC reaffirmed Africa's Common Position on UN Security Council reform (Ezulwini Consensus), called for diversified partnerships, sustainable financing for AU-led missions, and stronger commitment to APSA, democratic governance, and youth and women's inclusion. The Retreat also included a Model PSC simulation to engage youth and raise public awareness, and marked the launch of the Bankole Adeoye Fellowship, aimed at nurturing future African diplomats.

Field missions

During the review year, the PSC conducted two field missions, which is three times fewer than the field missions the PSC undertook in 2024. This is despite what was scheduled in the Annual Indicative Programme of 2025 that envisaged a field mission to eight countries based on PSC's decisions adopted in 2022 – 2024. Countries covered by the field mission in 2024 include: South Sudan (10 – 12 August)¹⁶⁴ and Guinea Conakry (30-31

¹⁶⁴ See the PSC 1297th session Communique that considered the PSC Field Mission Report on South Sudan conducted from 10 to 11 August 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1297comm_en.pdf and for an analytical

May).¹⁶⁵



PSC field missions 2025

Activities of the Subsidiary Bodies of the PSC

During the reporting period, the PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) played a central role in underpinning the Council's normative, procedural, and strategic work, with a strong emphasis on preparatory, review, and coordination functions. Much of the CoE's engagement was concentrated on reviewing key statutory and policy documents, notably the PSC's Annual Report on the State of Peace and Security in Africa and the implementation report

reflection, see Amani Africa's Ideas Indaba, 'PSC to undertake a field mission to South Sudan as it warns of 'the potential of a full-scale war'', 8 August 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/psc-to-undertake-a-field-mission-to-south-sudan-as-it-warns-of-the-potential-of-a-full-scale-war/> and Amani Africa Monthly Digest on the AUPSC, 'Other Activities of the PSC for the Month', August 2025, Page 16. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/August-Monthly-Digest-2025.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ See the report of the field mission to Conakry, Guinea, PSC/PR/FM.RPT.1284.1 (2025), 30 & 31 May 2025. Available at: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1284-PSC-Field-Mission-Report-Guinea-en.pdf> and the PSC 1284th session Communique that considered the Report of the PSC Field Mission to the Republic of Guinea, conducted from 30 to 31 May 2025. Available at: https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/1284comm_en.pdf

on the AU Master Roadmap for Silencing the Guns, both destined for consideration at the 38th AU Summit. While this reflects the CoE's importance in safeguarding the quality and coherence of PSC outputs, it also points to a continued prioritisation of process-heavy engagements over more forward-looking thematic analysis.

The CoE also undertook capacity-building and institutional strengthening initiatives, including orientation workshops on the Continental Early Warning System, preparatory work for PSC inductions, and retreats that addressed governance questions, such as sanctions architecture, counter-terrorism coordination, and structured engagement with the A3 at the UN Security Council.

In parallel, the Military Staff Committee (MSC) maintained a more limited engagement, largely centred on operational and security-specific matters. The Committee discussed lessons learned from AU Peace Support Operations, the operationalisation of the Combined Maritime Taskforce, the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, and the strategic review of the African Standby Force. However, the relatively infrequent convening of the MSC compared to the CoE highlights an imbalance between political-diplomatic preparation and military-strategic guidance within the PSC ecosystem. While MSC sessions provided valuable operational insights and reinforced the need for field-based assessments and evidence-driven recommendations, their limited frequency may have constrained the Council's ability to systematically integrate military perspectives into its decision-making.

IV. A TIME OF RECKONING FOR THE AU AND THE PSC

In 2024, a major Amani Africa publication concluded that 'the state of the peace and security situation on our continent 'makes the AU and its standing decision-making organ, the PSC, more critical than ever. With rising global geopolitical tensions and a weakened multilateral system, the effective functioning of the AU and its PSC is now a strategic imperative for Africa.'¹⁶⁶ As documented systematically in this review, it is as if the dire peace and security situation on the continent moved from the pan to the fire. Conflicts are mutating. Insecurity is deepening. In many instances, violence is unleashed indiscriminately and with impunity. To make matters worse, the multilateral system is 'rapturing'¹⁶⁷ and in its place 'mere anarchy is loosed upon the world'. In a time such as this, the value of multilateral frameworks such as the AU lies in how they make their policies, norms and institutional frameworks fit and relevant both for arresting the downward spiral of the peace and security situation on the continent and for enabling Africa to navigate the perils and seize the opportunities from the unravelling of the post-World War II global order. Alas, the state of the AU is anything but that. Instead of acting with the understanding that the AU and its PSC's functioning in

¹⁶⁶ Memo to the new AU Commission leadership from the roaring guns on the AU's first decade of silencing the guns (October 2024), Amani Africa Report No 23.

¹⁶⁷ Mark carney, Prime Minister of Canda, Principled and pragmatic: Canada's path, addressed delivered at the World Economic Forum on 26 January 2026 available on <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/speeches/2026/01/20/principled-and-pragmatic-canadas-path-prime-minister-carney-addresses>

such moments is 'a strategic (and even existential) imperative for Africa', the continental body and its decision-making structures are absent in mobilizing meaningful collective action. Their decisions tend to be more performative than consequential. As the data and analysis in this review attest, the focus of what is put as agenda and the outcome of the policy deliberation has become more and more out of tune with the realities and dynamics of the peace and security situation of the continent. The AU and the PSC seem to be floating adrift. Unable to provide collective leadership and deliver on the promise that the PSC Heads of State and Government made at the launch of the PSC to be the first to speak and the first to act against atrocious acts,¹⁶⁸ their role is being displaced.

4.1. Declare a state of emergency

It is not hyperbolic to say that taken together these dynamics have brought Africa and the AU to a crisis that reached a level of a state of emergency. The conclusion from the state of peace and security on the continent presented in this review is that the nature and scale of conflicts in some of the affected regions is such that they pose existential threat to the affected peoples and states.

It is also the conclusion of this review that no stone should be left unturned for craft and deploy the required **targeted policy action** for arresting the spiraling peace and security situation and reverse crystallisation of the new era of insecurity.

¹⁶⁸ PSC Heads of State and Government, Solemn launching of the Peace and Security Council, 25 May 2024. Available at: <https://papsrepository.africanunion.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8864fb34-04da-4669-9a24-00a158e4fc64/content>

Such action should focus on advancing impactful mechanisms for mitigating and managing on going conflicts at the very least and for **resolving them at best**. Equally significantly, such targeted action needs to be directed towards **preventing** the risks of eruption of new conflicts or relapse of countries in transition back to conflicts.

To this end, the AU and its member states need to put in place **an emergency situation room commanded by the AU Commission Chairperson** for the PSC and the accompanying African Peace and Security Architecture structures to have focused, sustained, relevant engagement. This such emergency situation room can accomplish through developing, proposing and mobilizing consensus around emergency measures tailored to each situation and leveraging the role and contributions states, intergovernmental and other actors key to achieving progress for each situation.

4.2. Renewal of Pan-Africanism as political and strategic framework for collective action

The AU's comparative advantage in responding to the continent's evolving peace and security challenges lies neither in coercive capacity nor in financial leverage, but in its normative legitimacy. Its ability to confer political recognition, define continental standards, and link peace processes to governance and rights remains the AU's most distinctive asset. Equally, if not more, importantly, its record shows that where the AU registered success in advancing peace depended on its convening power, mobilization of consensus for collective action and provision of robust diplomatic leadership. However, the erosion of this legitimacy in

recent years points to a deeper crisis that cannot be addressed through technical or institutional reforms alone. Indeed, as much as endowing the AU with more funds for peace is important, no amount of funding will make up for the lack of mobilization of effective collective action.

For the AU to remain relevant in 2026 and beyond, it must reassert its convening authority within an increasingly fragmented peace and security landscape. It needs to reinvigorate Pan-Africanism as political and strategic framework for restoring commitment of member states and for enlisting the contribution of the wider African public for continental priorities, not least of all, peace and security that no country can advance on its own.

The proliferation of overlapping mediation initiatives, uncoordinated political interventions, and externally driven transactional stabilization efforts has weakened coherence and diluted continental norms. Reclaiming leadership in this space requires the AU to more deliberately articulate effective strategy for a political and diplomatic prevention and resolution of conflicts and mobilise member states and regional actors fully support and collaboration. This needs to be accompanied by action to enforce coordination and establish clearer standards for mediation participation and conduct. Without these measures, peace processes risk remaining procedurally active while failing to address the political drivers of conflict.

Central to this recalibration is also the re-centering of civic legitimacy in peace processes. The growing tendency to prioritize short-term stability over inclusive and accountable political

settlements has undermined both the durability and credibility of AU-supported interventions. Renewing Pan-Africanism in practice requires peace initiatives that are grounded in addressing the drivers and underlying conditions of conflicts and insecurity, rather than elite accommodation alone. This entails treating citizens, not least of all women and youth, not as passive beneficiaries of peace, but as political actors whose inclusion is essential to sustainable conflict resolution.

At a broader level, Pan-Africanism must be reclaimed as a disciplined political project rather than a symbolic rhetorical tool that is referenced without conviction. In an increasingly fragmented and competitive global order, Africa's agency requires moral authority and collective unified voice, the building of multi-aligned partnerships having regard to its needs and leveraging its natural resources endowment collectively for projecting material power. The AU's voice on peace and security draws its ability to facilitate negotiation between member states on how to collectively address continental challenges and to enforce and defend collectively agreed upon norms and policies based on solidarity, justice, and collective responsibility. When these principles are inconsistently applied or subordinated to political expediency, the credibility of continental leadership is weakened both internally and externally.

4.3. Rebuild the AU's agency through credible peacemaking and the restoration of the primacy of diplomacy for peace

The erosion of *pax Africana* is a function mainly of a gradual but weakening of the AU's agency as a peacemaking actor.

This decline is not primarily the result of capacity constraints but of diminished credibility in how peacemaking processes are initiated, led, and sustained. It is about challenges of political and diplomatic imagination, robust technical competence and sustained presence and engagement as well as political and moral courage in exercising leadership by leveraging common policies and norms, particularly when the issues are difficult.

At the center of the effort to address these challenges is the need to reaffirm diplomacy for peace anchored on technical astuteness and AU policies and norms as the AU's principal instrument for managing conflicts and governance crises. Credible peacemaking depends on the AU's capacity to initiate mediation processes that are seen as impartial, strategically guided, and institutionally and normatively anchored as well as supported by all critical actors. This places a premium on the careful development of political strategy for the resolution of particular conflicts and constitution of mediation processes, with relevant tools tailored to the specificities of each situation. It also requires stronger political oversight, and sustained engagement rather than episodic crisis response. Without these elements, AU interventions will remain symbolic rather than consequential.

In a time when 'anarchy is loosed upon the world', equally critical is the AU's ability to navigate and help the continent navigate the geopolitical tussle that is heating up and coordinate effectively across a crowded peace and security landscape. Fragmentation among AU organs, Regional Economic Communities, ad hoc initiatives, and external actors has diluted leadership and blurred accountability.

Rebuilding the agency requires clearer leadership roles, disciplined coordination, and the consistent assertion of continental frameworks as the reference point for conflict resolution. In the absence of such coherence, even well-intentioned diplomatic efforts are unlikely to translate into durable outcomes.

Beyond questions of agency and process, Africa's peace and security challenges point to a deeper failure to uphold the primacy of politics as the guiding framework for multilateral action. Too often, conflict responses have been reduced to technical fixes, transactional arrangements, or short-term stabilization efforts that sidestep the underlying political nature of violence and governance crises. Re-centering politics is therefore essential to restoring meaning and effectiveness to conflict prevention and resolution.

Political settlements, not ceasefires, elections, or power-sharing deals in isolation, must remain the core objective of peacemaking. Ceasefires are necessary entry points, but when treated as endpoints, they entrench fragility rather than resolve it. Similarly, elections conducted in insecure, exclusionary, or contested political environments risk exacerbating conflict rather than consolidating peace. Political consensus, inclusion, and credible security guarantees must precede electoral processes, not follow them.

The primacy of politics also demands that regional and transnational dimensions of conflict be addressed through integrated strategies. Conflicts sustained by cross-border dynamics, war economies, and external sponsorship cannot be resolved through nationally siloed approaches.

When decisions are taken without enforcement or consequence, they undermine the authority of multilateral institutions and normalize impunity. Credibility depends on the willingness to match political decisions with meaningful follow-through.

Re-centering civilians within peace processes is equally political. Excluding social forces, displaced populations, youth, and women from negotiations strips peace initiatives of legitimacy and weakens their durability. Sustainable peace cannot be engineered solely through elite bargains; it must be anchored in societal consent and political inclusion.

4.4. Restoring the effectiveness of the PSC

The declining effectiveness of the PSC mirrors a broader erosion of political commitment to continental collective security. It is also importantly a product of PSC's work becoming more performative than consequential, at times its engagement dominated by thematic issues and often no effective action on specific conflict situations. Poor agenda setting and the reduction of PSC activities into a routine ritual like processes are among the factors that account for this state of affair in which the dire conflict situations are not approached with urgency and seriousness they deserve.

Making the PSC fit for purpose and relevant to the peace and security situation of the continent requires changing these conditions. The agenda setting of the PSC and the policy deliberation of the PSC should prioritise and deploy the limited diplomatic institutional resources exclusively

for addressing existing conflicts and preventing the eruption of new ones. Aligned to acting in a state of emergency, the PSC should thus have as a standing agenda on the most critical conflict situations such as Sudan, South Sudan, the Sahel, DRC and Somalia at least, **on a quarterly if not on a monthly basis** during which the AU Commission presents reports of the emergency situation room for adapting AU engagement to the rhythm and needs of the conflict dynamics. In the interest of optimizing its very finite resources and ensuring sustained engagement on addressing these priority conflict situations with resolve and impact, the PSC should also adopt a moratorium on having thematic issues on its agenda.

Additionally, the effectiveness of the PSC is also affected by the willingness and ability of its members to shoulder the responsibilities of PSC membership as set out in Article 5 particularly its subparagraph 2. The current approach to PSC membership that puts premium on rotation to the detriment of Article 5(2) criteria is undermining the effectiveness of the Council. It has limited the PSC's normative and political weight, creating enormous gulf between PSC decisions and their effective follow through.

A criteria-based approach is essential to the PSC's credibility, ensuring members demonstrate commitment, diplomatic capacity, and adherence to AU norms, preventing deliberations from becoming mere symbolism. Eroded standards have also diminished peer accountability, fostering weak enforcement, selective engagement, and inconsistent follow-through, much like past consensus-driven arrangements lacking commitment. Restoring effectiveness demands

recommitment to criteria-based membership rooted in political credibility, capacity, and norm respect, bolstering authority and collective responsibility; without it, broader peace and security reforms will falter.

Not any less important for the credibility and effectiveness of the PSC is aligning its current posture and practice with the statement of commitment the PSC adopted during its solemn launching in 2004. Of significance in this respect is the commitment that ‘we shall ensure that the authority vested in the Peace and Security Council is **fairly and proactively** exercised.’¹⁶⁹ (emphasis added) The lack of alignment in recent times between the practice of the PSC and this commitment is one of the factors for the erosion of the credibility of the PSC. This has manifested itself not only in inconsistent application of AU policies and norms such as in relation to unconstitutional changes of government but also the lack of fairness in the attention given in dealing with conflict situations.

4.5. Towards a common foreign policy to make Africa fit for a multipolar world order

Africa’s increasing strategic significance in a rapidly evolving multipolar order has outpaced the coherence of its external engagement. Despite growing demand for the continent’s resources, diplomatic support, and political alignment, Africa continues to approach international partnerships largely through fragmented bilateral channels. This has limited collective leverage and reinforced asymmetrical relationships, even as external actors engage the continent through increasingly coordinated and

strategic frameworks. In the absence of a unified approach, Africa risks remaining exposed to competitive external pressures and transactional and extractive arrangements that avail Africa and priorities fleeting benefits that are no more than crumbs over substantive and strategic immediate and long-term interests.

To address this imbalance, Africa’s external engagement must shift decisively from parallel national strategies toward coordinated continental action. Replacing the proliferation of uncoordinated summitry with structured continental partnership frameworks would enable African states to negotiate major agreements collectively, particularly in strategic sectors such as infrastructure development, critical minerals, and security cooperation. Such an approach would not eliminate bilateral relations, but would anchor them within a shared continental framework that strengthens negotiating power, aligns priorities, and reduces vulnerability to divide-and-rule dynamics.

Institutionalizing a common pan-African foreign policy would provide the political and strategic framework on how Africa can advance its collective interests and project its voice effectively. Apart from serving as necessary tool for shielding African states from the predatory tendencies of a time in which ‘anarchy is loosed upon the world’, such a common pan-African foreign policy would provide the framework for more effectively negotiating and coordinating common positions. It would also provide the operational principles and guidelines for collaboration with others, building coalitions and making partnerships deliver for Africa, drawing on the AU

¹⁶⁹ As above.

Constitutive Act. Such a common foreign policy also becomes the basis for undertaking periodic continental strategic assessment that could avail unified analysis of global trends, external actors' strategies, and emerging risks, thereby enabling Africa to plan and engage proactively rather than reactively. It would also provide the much-needed point of reference for reorganizing and reimagining the role of AU's representational offices.

By generating shared intelligence and coordinating diplomatic responses, anchoring the policy on a new commissioner for external action or a high-representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for common African foreign policy action would help correct information asymmetries and ensure that Africa's growing global presence translates into strategic influence. Without such coherence, the continent's potential risks remaining underleveraged and individual African states and societies will be left without the possibility for fending themselves from predatory actors. Having such a common policy is not just a nice thing to have but a necessity, at a time when collective action is essential to safeguarding Africa's interests in a more competitive and multipolar global order.

4.6. Commission a new strategic report on translating policy commitments to action

The transition to a new African Union Commission offers a rare opportunity to reassert continental leadership at a moment of heightened political, security, and geopolitical uncertainty. Commissioning a new strategic report offers a chance to reset direction and

focus, provided it is conceived as a forward-looking intervention that confronts present realities rather than reiterating aspirational goals. Such a report would need to be grounded in a sober assessment of the continent's condition, acknowledging gaps between ambition and outcome, and situating peace, security, and governance challenges within an increasingly fragmented global order.

The strategic value of the report should lie in its emphasis on implementation. The AU's challenge today is not a shortage of norms or decisions, but the persistent failure to translate commitments into action. A report anchored in delivery would help reorient continental attention toward why implementation has faltered, where political will has been uneven, and how accountability can be strengthened. By narrowing the focus to commitments already made, the initiative could shift the AU away from agenda proliferation and toward a more disciplined, results-oriented approach to multilateral action.

Equally important is the political process surrounding the report. Elevating it to discussion at an extraordinary AU summit would create a moment of collective reckoning and recommitment at the highest level, reinforcing unity as a strategic necessity rather than a rhetorical ideal. While no report can, on its own, resolve Africa's challenges, a well-crafted and politically backed initiative can shape priorities, mobilize leadership, and restore credibility. If grounded in realism and followed by concrete commitments, the report could serve as a catalyst for renewed continental agency; without it, the gap between promise and performance is likely to widen further at a moment when Africa can least afford

fragmentation.

and development interests.

4.7. The imperative for strategy on relations with and role of middle powers

The influence and intervention of middle powers, particularly those in proximity to Africa such as those in the Middle East and the Gulf, on Africa has grown exponentially during the past decade. While not unique to one region, it has particularly been prominent in the Horn of Africa. While these countries are expanding their influence and interventions based on and in pursuit of specific geopolitical and strategic interests, there is no indication that Africa interfaces with their expanding activities on the continent with clear and collective strategy. From Libya to Somalia and Sudan, such asymmetry is increasingly creating deleterious consequences, exposing many countries to perpetual instability and the plundering of their resources. This is particularly the case in fueling and exacerbating political instability and conflicts. As we noted in relation to Sudan, the influence of these actors has come to outweigh those of the direct conflict parties, making resolution much more challenging.

Unless the vacuum from lack of strategy and institutional arrangement for managing and negotiating the relations and engagement of these powers is rectified, the situation will only get worse, putting the peace and security and development prospects of the continent in grave peril. In addition to the development of a common foreign policy, it is of paramount significance that the AU develops a strategy on Africa's relations with Middle East and the Gulf along with a mechanism for structured dialogue on advancing common security



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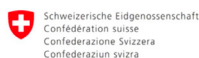
ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

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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