



No. 8, March 2010

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Peace and Security Council Protocol

'The PSC shall encourage non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. When required such organizations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council' – Article 20 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC of the African Union

Early Warning Issues for March

The scheduled Rotating Chair of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of March is Zambia. In the absence of a country's representation at ambassadorial level, an alternate member will chair the Council for the month.

Niger

On 29 October 2009, the PSC issued a communiqué, **PSC/AHG/COMM.3(CCVII)**, endorsing the decision on Niger adopted by the Extraordinary Summit of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Heads of State and Government, held on 17 October 2009, in Abuja, Nigeria. Niger's political landscape was drastically altered when on 18 February 2010 a group of soldiers staged a military coup and detained President Mamadou Tandja as well as several cabinet ministers. The leader of the group, Salou Djibo, declared

that the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD), the military junta which usurped power, had suspended the country's new constitution and dissolved all state institutions. The restoration of constitutional order has to be closely scrutinised to ensure that the military leadership does not entrench itself in power.

Comoros

On 9 May 2007, the PSC issued a communiqué, **PSC/MIN/Comm.1 (LXXVII)**, authorising the deployment of the African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission (MAES) to the Comoros. On 30 April 2008, the PSC communiqué, **PSC/PR/COMM(CXXIV)**, extended the mandate of the MAES to assist the central government undertake post-conflict reconstruction and oversee the forthcoming legislative elections. The Council also urged the island State authorities to create an environment conducive to free, fair and democratic elections. In December 2009, after a series of postponements, these polls were

convened. However, tensions have resurfaced linked to the outcome of the poll which could escalate the crisis situation in the country.

Nigeria's Niger Delta

On 10 February 2010, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, commended the initiative to install Goodluck Jonathan as Nigeria's Acting Head of State in the absence of the Country's President, Umaru Yar'Adua, due to ill health. The Chairperson commended the authorities and people of Nigeria for demonstrating a 'respect for the constitution, good governance, democracy and the rule of law'. At a regional level, on 23 June 2008 the ECOWAS issued communiqué **ECW/A/OJUN34** applauding the Nigerian Government's Amnesty Programme which it extended to armed militia in the Niger Delta. The lengthy absence of the country's President Yar'Adua, since 23 November 2009, prompted concerns about a political vacuum to address insecurity in the Niger Delta.

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Livingstone Formula

'Civil Society Organizations may provide technical support to the African Union by undertaking early warning reporting, and situation analysis which feeds information into the decision-making process of the PSC' – **PSC/PR/(CLX)**, 5 December 2008, Conclusions of a Retreat of the PSC on a mechanism of interaction between the Council and CSOs. This Report is an independent publication of the Institute for Security Studies.

Pending PSC Issues

Issues pending for the Council include:

Panel of the Wise:

In January 2007, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorsed the Chairperson of the Commission's recommendation for the appointment of five esteemed African personalities to serve as members of the Panel of the Wise. At its 100th meeting on 12 November 2007, the PSC adopted a set of detailed **Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise**. These Modalities state that 'members of the Panel serve for a period of three years. They shall be eligible for reappointment for only one more term'. The three year period for the first term of the Panel concluded in January 2010. The PSC and the AU Commission have not issued a communiqué indicating whether the terms of the Panel members have been renewed, or whether new Panel members have been appointed.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Niger

Previous PSC Communiqués and Recommendations:

On 29 October 2009, the PSC issued a communiqué, **PSC/AHG/COMM.3(CCVII)**, endorsing the decision on Niger adopted by the Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, held on 17 October 2009, in Abuja, Nigeria. It also requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to intensify his efforts towards resolving the ongoing crisis and to continue working closely with ECOWAS. The Fourteenth AU Summit, held from 25 January to 2

February 2010, issued its Decision Document on the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the Situation of Peace and Security in Africa in which it noted the ongoing mediation process being facilitated by former Nigerian President Abdulsalami Abubakar and urged the inter-Nigerien parties to fully cooperate with the mediator.

Crisis Escalation Potential:

Niger's political landscape was drastically altered when on 18 February 2010 a group of soldiers staged a military coup and detained President Mamadou Tandja as well as several cabinet ministers. The leader of the group, Salou Djibo, declared that the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy (CSRD) had suspended the country's new constitution and dissolved all state institutions. Following the coup d'état, which reportedly unfolded without major interruptions to the country's daily life, several towns witnessed thousands of people taking to the streets to demonstrate what was widely regarded as support for the coup. It was reported that the CSRD committed itself to the involvement of political parties as well as civil society organisations in the drafting of a new constitution and in the design of a transitional process after the situation had been stabilised. It also stated Tandja and other senior government officials were being kept in comfortable conditions in the service quarters of the Presidency where the Red Cross was provided with access to them. Several days after the putsch, the CSRD appointed Mahamadou Danda as Prime Minister in a transitional government. Danda was previously Minister for Information in the transitional government that was set up after Niger's previous coup in 1999.

The situation, although it involved the illegitimate capture of power, appears to be relatively calm. The country's new military regime has demonstrated its willingness to

engage with regional, continental and international actors. Furthermore, the promise of a speedy return to constitutional order has, at least for now, resulted in an optimistic atmosphere among key stakeholders in Niger as well as in the international community. However, the process that will indeed lead the country to reverse its previous trajectory will have to be closely monitored by both national and international actors. The situation will need to be transformed quickly in order to avoid the potential frustration and factionalisation in the country's relatively united opposition, especially now that the 'common enemy' has been removed from the scene. The crisis escalation potential in Niger remains high and the current transitional period will have to deliver tangible results relatively soon to assuage fears that this might be another military take-over which transforms itself into the entrenchment of power.

Key Issues and Internal Dynamics:

The coup came after a series of meetings facilitated by the ECOWAS appointed mediator in the Niger Crisis, former Nigerian President Abubakar. The meetings achieved little progress reportedly due to the intransigence of President Tandja, who rejected proposals which would compel him to hand over power in less than a year and who insisted on maintaining the country's new controversial constitution. This constitution was adopted following a referendum that was declared illegal by both the country's judiciary (which was subsequently dissolved by Tandja) as well as a spectrum of international partners and organisations. The new constitution would have enabled President Tandja to extend his reign for a further three years without elections after having governed for two five-year terms, which officially came to an end on 22 December 2009. The new constitution also rescinded the two-term limits enshrined in the preceding 1999 constitution.

In July 2009 the first volume of this Report suggested that one of the scenarios that could evolve in Niger would include: 'A section of the security forces disloyal to Tandja sides with his opponents, and the crisis situation degenerates'. To an extent this is what is now unravelling in Niger.

Documentation:

Relevant AU Documents:

- PSC/PR/COMM.2(CCXVI) (19 February 2010) Communiqué on Niger
- AU Communiqué (19 February 2010) The Chairperson of the Commission Condemns the Seizure of Power by Force in Niger
- Assembly/AU/Draft/Dec.1(XIV)Rev.2 (2 February 2010) Decision on the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the Situation of Peace and Security in Africa

- EX.CL/566 (XVI) (2 February 2010) Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Prevention of Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Strengthening the Capacities of the African Union to Manage Such Situations
- Assembly/AU/Draft/Dec.2(XIV)Rev.2 (2 February 2010) Decision on the Prevention of Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Strengthening the Capacities of the African Union to Manage Such Situations

- Assembly/AU/Dec.220(XII) (2 February 2010) Decision on the Resurgence of the Scourge of Coups d'État in Africa

RECs Documents:

- ECOWAS Statement N° 020/2010 (16 February 2010) ECOWAS Leaders Exhort Nigerien Parties to Demonstrate Flexibility in Resolving Political Crisis

PSC RETROSPECTIVE: Election of the PSC Members

On 1 February 2010, fifteen countries of the African Union were elected to the Peace and Security Council, during the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of Ministers, in Addis Ababa. The election was subsequently endorsed at the Fourteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Earlier towards the end of 2009, the AU Commission had issued an announcement regarding the fifteen PSC vacancies that arose as a result of the expiry of three-year terms of office of five members of the PSC elected in January 2007 as well as the conclusion of the two-year terms of ten members of the PSC who were elected in January 2008. This meant that all the fifteen positions on the PSC were vacant prior to the 2010 election.

The elections were in accordance with Article 5 (1) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC that governs the polls for Council membership. Procedurally, in electing the members of the

Council, the Assembly applies the principle of equitable regional representation and national rotation. Article 5(2) stipulates that the criteria of the selection of each prospective member state including among others: the country's contribution to the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in Africa; its willingness and ability to take up responsibility for regional and continental conflict resolution initiatives; as well as respect for constitutional governance, in accordance with the Lomé Declaration.

Accordingly, the five countries that were elected to serve for a period of three years as from March 2010 are:

1. Republic of Equatorial Guinea – Central Africa;
2. Republic of Kenya – Eastern Africa;
3. Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya – Northern Africa;
4. Republic of Zimbabwe – Southern Africa;
5. Federal Republic of Nigeria – Western Africa.

The other ten members of the PSC elected for a term of two years are:

Central Africa

1. Republic of Burundi;
2. Republic of Chad;

Eastern Africa

3. Republic of Djibouti;
4. Republic of Rwanda;

Northern Africa

5. Republic of Mauritania;

Southern Africa

6. Republic of Namibia;
7. Republic of South Africa;

Western Africa

8. Republic of Benin;
9. Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;
10. Republic of Mali.

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PSC RETROSPECTIVE: Election of the PSC Members (continued)

Among these countries Benin, Burundi, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, and Rwanda were re-elected. Most regions had determined who the members from each region would be prior to the Summit, so the elections were essentially a formality. Most regions rotated new members into the Council, however, with the re-election of previous members the institutional memory of the PSC would be preserved which should enable to continue its functions without any undue disruption.

Article 8(6) of the PSC Protocol states that new members of the Council take up office on the first day of April after their election by the AU Summit. The new list of Council members and the inaugural Chairperson for the month of April has to be formally communicated to PSC members and other AU Member States before the end of February 2010.

At the Retreat of the PSC convened from 5 to 6 July 2007 in Dakar, Senegal, the Council resolved to adopt the practice of a monthly Rotating Chairmanship, **PSC/PR/2(LXXXIII)**. According to Article 8(6) of the PSC Protocol, the Chair of the Council shall be held in turn by the members of the Council in the alphabetical order of the names of individual countries for a period of one calendar month. In other words, following each election PSC members will assume the Rotating Chairmanship according to the alphabetical order of the names of their countries. The Chair of the PSC is occupied by the Permanent Representative of the country that is designated to chair the Council for a particular month. The Permanent Representative has to be duly accredited to the AU Commission and he or she is therefore expected to remain in Addis Ababa, where the AU headquarters are located,

during his or her chairmanship. He or she also has the mandate to request briefings from the different committees of the PSC and other organs and institutions of the AU. In addition, through the Livingstone Formula, the Chair of the PSC can engage directly with civil society organisations on a range of early warning, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding issues.

The election of Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya, among others, means that key pivotal states in Africa's various regions will now be able to bring their extensive experience and resources in peacemaking and peacekeeping to the activities of the PSC. Nigeria is already a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. South Africa has secured the prospective support of the AU as the candidate from the Southern Africa region for the 2011-2012 term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC. The potential election of other new members of the AU PSC to the UN Security Council may bridge the communication gap that exists between the two institutions. However, the extent to which African countries that are elected to the UN Security Council will be able to forge a common voice and articulate the perspective of the PSC remains to be seen.

The AU has declared 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security, but there are a number of violent conflicts on the continent, amongst others in the Darfur region of Sudan and Somalia which will continue to occupy the attention of the PSC. In addition, there are countries that have a high crisis escalation potential including South Sudan, Guinea, Madagascar and Niger which will also require the Council's attention. The PSC will therefore be confronted by significant challenges, but based on its prior initiatives the Council has established a precedent for

increasing the extent and degree of its intervention to promote peace on the African continent. Within the framework of the Year of Peace and Security, the AU Summit has already requested the Council to undertake proactive initiatives to continue preventing conflict as well as promoting post-conflict reconstruction. A cursory assessment of its five-year existence reveals that the PSC has convened almost 220 meetings and issued as many communiqués and statements relating to crisis and conflict situations in Burundi, CAR, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, and Zimbabwe, among others. The Council has also authorised sanctions against several member states, most notably against the military junta in Guinea following the September 2009 massacre of innocent civilians, and against Mauritania prior to the July 2009 elections. The Council has authorised the deployment of four peace operations namely in Burundi (2003 to 2004), Sudan (2004 to present, now being jointly undertaken with the UN), the Comoros (2006 to present) and Somalia (2007 to present). Undoubtedly, the Council has demonstrated its ability engage with crisis situations in Africa and will continue to function as one of the most important and powerful organs of Africa's evolving peace and security architecture.

Comoros

Previous PSC Communiqués and Recommendations:

On 9 May 2007, the PSC issued a communiqué, **PSC/MIN/Comm.1 (LXXVII)**, authorising the deployment of the African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission (MAES) to the Comoros. Subsequently, on 10 October 2007, it issued communiqué **PSC/PR/COMM(XCV)**, which imposed targeted sanctions on the authorities of Anjouan which had unilaterally declared independence from Comoros. On 30 April 2008, PSC communiqué **PSC/PR/COMM(CXXIV)** extended the mandate of the MAES to assist the central government undertake post-conflict reconstruction and oversee the forthcoming legislative elections. The Council also urged the island State authorities to create an environment conducive to free, fair and democratic elections. In December 2009, after a series of postponements, these polls were convened.

Crisis Escalation Potential:

At the end of January 2010, students in Comoros staged protests against the extended school closures following a strike by teachers demanding payment of their salaries. Public sector teachers have been on strike for almost a month in response to payment arrears of up to six months. In effect, schools have been closed since the beginning of this year. Hundreds of school students and university undergraduates marched with their teachers through the capital Moroni protesting against the government. Tensions escalated after a section of the protesters began to throw projectiles at business installations. In response, the security forces blocked access to an avenue leading to President Ahmed Abdallah Sambi's palace.

Some of the teachers alleged that Sambi's ruling coalition which won a parliamentary election in December has not delivered on its commitment to manage the economy effectively.

On 7 February 2010, Comorian security forces arrested and briefly detained the leader of the opposition movement Said Larifou. Earlier in 2009, Larifou had been designated as the National Secretary of a coalition of parties opposed to President Sambi. Though no official reason was given, observers note that he was accused of allegedly initiating and politicising the student riot as he had vocally supported the protests that were held in January 2010. Larifou, who heads the Ridja Party, was arraigned in court and subsequently released the following day with a summons to reappear at the prosecutor's office. On 9 February 2010, Larifou announced that he would go on hunger strike. He stated that his cyclical arrests are undermining his freedom to function as a citizen and politician. The tensions relating to the referendum and the rotating presidency of the island state could escalate the crisis situation in the country.

Key Issues and Internal Dynamics:

At the heart of the Comorian crisis is a quest to control the country's limited resources in conditions of pronounced poverty, which has generated a highly competitive and often violent political environment. Comoros has had a troubled political history and has experienced more than 20 coups since its independence from France in 1975. The recent legislative elections which were originally due to take place in July 2009 were subsequently held between 6 and 20 December 2009. These polls were designed to stabilise the country. The Comoros has 24 parliamentary constituencies. Nine of the seats in the legislature are filled by appointees from the assemblies of the autonomous islands of the Comoros: Grande

Comore, Mohéli and Anjouan. The Assembly of each island selects 3 members. On 6 December 2009, the first round of elections took place without any significant incidents. However, only two constituencies achieved results in which there was an outright majority in the first round. In both instances President Sambi's party won the poll. Therefore a second round became a necessity and was duly convened on 20 December 2009. The official results subsequently announced that President Sambi's Baobab (named after the tree) Coalition won a majority of seats in the Assembly. The opposition won five constituencies and three of these were on the island of Mohéli.

The Presidential term of office in the Comoros is four years and an office holder is entitled to just one mandate. This system was effectively devised after Anjouan, one of the three islands that make up the Union of Comoros, decided in 1997 to pursue independence from the Union. In essence, Anjouan wanted to revert to French rule citing economic and political marginalisation by the other islands. France rejected the request and this precipitated bloody confrontations between the federal troops and rebels. The AU deployed a special mission to depose the irridentionist leader Mohammed Bacar, who had declared himself as the de facto president of Anjouan. Ultimately, through negotiations brokered in part by the AU an agreement was reached to ensure that a framework of a rotating presidency among the three islands was established. A union government of the three islands was also established with a new system of political autonomy. In keeping with the principle of a rotating presidency, Mwali island, with a population of 38,000 people, is due to provide a President in 2011.

On 17 May 2009, a referendum was convened in Comoros, which effectively amended the 2001

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AU Post-Summit Analysis

From 25 January to 2 February 2010, the African Union convened its Fourteenth Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Even though the official theme of the summit was 'Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development', there were a number of peace and security-related issues that featured in the deliberations and final decisions of the Assembly.

Launch of the Year of Peace and Security in Africa:

In August 2009, AU Heads of State and Government of the AU, met in Tripoli, Libya, and declared 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security. During the February 2010 Summit, a flame of peace was symbolically handed over to the newly elected Chairperson of the Assembly, Malawian President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika. This flame of peace will be transported to all AU member states. The idea behind this declaration is to bring a degree of focus on addressing the challenge of promoting peace and security in Africa. Activities will include events geared towards raising the profile of the AU in its efforts in promoting peace as well as in engaging with academic institutions and civil society to generate awareness of strategies for making peace.

Unconstitutional Change of Government:

The summit considered the growing phenomenon of unconstitutional changes of government following a Report that was presented on this issue by the AU Commission. Earlier in December 2009, the PSC had discussed the need to implement sanctions in the event of an unconstitutional change of

government. This AU commitment was immediately tested when a coup d'état took place in Niger on 18 February 2010, overthrowing former President Tandja. The AU duly issued sanctions on the coup leaders and suspended Niger's membership of the continental body and urged a precipitous return to constitutional order in the country.

Justice and Accountability:

The AU Summit also discussed the forthcoming Review Conference of the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the incidental issue of the pending indictment of President Omar Al Bashir of Sudan for alleged war crimes committed in Darfur. The AU Summit endorsed the recommendations of the Ministerial Preparatory Meeting on the Rome Statute held in November 2009 in Addis Ababa. Specifically, the Summit noted the Ministerial recommendations for:

- the proposal for amendment of article 16 of the Rome Statute;
- addressing procedural issues including guidelines for the exercise of prosecutorial discretion by the ICC prosecutor;
- the immunity of officials whose states are not parties to the ICC treaty; and
- proposals regarding the crime of aggression.

There are 30 AU Member States that parties to the Rome Statute and the majority will attend the ICC Review Conference in Kampala from 31 May to 11 June 2010.

Climate Change and the Post-Copenhagen Conference:

The Summit considered a Report of the AU Commission on the climate

change negotiations which were convened in Copenhagen in December 2009. Analysis already pointed to the impact of global climate change on armed conflict in Africa, particularly with regards to increasing drought and competition over land. In this regard, the Summit encouraged member states to endorse the provisions of the Copenhagen Accords by submitting their individual positions on this matter to the Secretariat of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Fourteenth AU Summit also endorsed the leadership of Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, as Coordinator of the Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC). Zenawi will also coordinate the African position through CAHOSCC in the next two climate conferences in Mexico in 2010 and in South Africa in 2011.

Additional Summit Decisions:

In addition to the decisions adopted above, the Summit:

- approved for the integration of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into the AU structures. This will be achieved by the establishment of a NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA). The NPCA will serve as a technical specialised agency of the AU and will replace the existing NEPAD Secretariat;
- requested the AU Commission to coordinate the organisation of joint election observation missions with the Pan-African Parliament and other relevant institutions of the Union;

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AU Post-Summit Analysis (continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• endorsed report of the feasibility study on the establishment of Trust Fund for African Women and issues related to their empowerment;• decided that the theme of the Summit for January 2011 would be dedicated to the 'Shared Values of the African Union' including identifying obstacles and measures to be adopted to facilitate continental integration based on common principles; and• approved a budget of approximately USD 250 million for the financial year 2010.	<p>indicate that fighting between the Sudanese army and armed militia continues, civilians remain at risk and peacekeepers are routinely being harassed. With reference to South Sudan, a number of analysts have also warned that the conflict escalation potential remains significantly high due to the forthcoming nationwide elections this year and the 2011 referendum on Southern secession. The AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has deployed over 5,000 peacekeepers in to the country composed of contingents from Uganda and Burundi. However, the situation in the country remains precarious for an embattled Transitional Federal Government (TFG) which continues to be targeted by armed militia. The now notorious Al-Shabaab insurgents continue to make military inroads and have recently captured a key town close to the border with Kenya. The ongoing crisis in Somalia continues to destabilise the region</p>	<p>and generate refugee flows. Lastly, there are challenges related to the restoration of constitutional order in Madagascar, Guinea and Niger which will continue to require the attention of the AU.</p> <p>Overall the 2010 AU Summit was notable for its raft of decisions on key issues such as the unconstitutional change of government and international justice. The declaration of a Year of Peace and Security will not translate into a continent at peace with itself in a twelve month period, as the recent events in Niger indicate. However, the declaration can serve as an important catalyst for creating a more enabling political environment to achieve peace and security with the participation of African citizens.</p>
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Nigeria's Niger Delta

Previous AU/REC Statements and Communiqués:

On 10 February 2010, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Jean Ping, commended the initiative to install Goodluck Jonathan as Nigeria's Acting Head of State in the absence of the Country's President, Umaru Yar'Adua, due to ill health, since November 2009. The Chairperson commended the authorities and people of Nigeria for demonstrating a 'respect for the constitution, good governance, democracy and the rule of law'. He also encouraged 'all the stakeholders in Nigeria, including the military, to continue in their firm support for and practice of constitutionality'. The Solemn Launching of the AU PSC, communiqué **PSC/AHG/Comm.(IX)** of 25 May 2004 requested the Commission of the AU to monitor the conflicts on the continent 'and to keep the Council seized on future developments and how best we can effectively address each of them'. The situation in the Niger Delta however has not yet been considered by the Council.

At a regional level, on 23 June 2008, ECOWAS issued communiqué **ECW/A/OJUN34** through its Abuja-based Commission, applauding the Nigerian Government's Amnesty Programme which it extended to armed militia in the Niger Delta. The ECOWAS communiqué called for the reintegration of former militants into society and for renewed efforts to promote peacebuilding and reconstruction of the region. ECOWAS lamented the ongoing violence in the Delta and expressed its solidarity with the Nigerian Government and its citizens in searching for the peaceful resolution of the crisis. ECOWAS commended the policies initiated by President Yar'Adua aimed at the comprehensive development of the Niger Delta region and called upon

the militants to desist from all acts of violence and embrace the path of dialogue in order to achieve sustainable peace in the region.

Crisis Escalation Potential:

In early February 2010, the main armed militia in the Niger Delta, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), indicated that it would target oil company installations as well as personnel. MEND has been calling for a greater degree of autonomy and a genuine partnership between the local people and government in the management of their natural resources and their utilisation for the promotion of development. In December 2009, a MEND faction attacked a pipeline in response to what it saw as a lack of progress with the peace talks.

The lengthy absence of the country's President Yar'Adua prompted concerns about a political vacuum to address pressing issues such as the situation in the Niger Delta. However, a National Assembly vote for the installation of Jonathan has to a certain extent assuaged tensions. Nevertheless, there are suggestions that this installation could be legally challenged. The lack of clarity on the national leadership question could further undermine efforts to address insecurity in the Niger Delta.

Key Issues and Internal Dynamics

The challenges in the Niger Delta date back to the late 1950's and successive Nigerian governments have sought to address the situation through Commissions of Inquiry. The region extends over approximately 70,000 km² and constitutes approximately seven percent of Nigeria's land mass. It consists of the present day Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta States. However, in 2000, the Obasanjo administration expanded the parameters of the Niger Delta to include Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Cross

River States. This now represents 30 million people from about 40 ethnic groups. Since 1975, the region has accounted for more than 75 percent of Nigeria's export earnings. However, the challenge has been in the implementation of these recommendations in a way that would assuage the tensions in the region. More recently, former President Olusegun Obasanjo convened the Ogomudia Committee in 2001 to assess the issues in the Niger Delta. However, the recommendations of the Committee were not made public.

The inauguration of President Yar'Adua in May 2007 offered an opportunity for a renewed initiative to address the situation in the Niger Delta. The Yar'Adua administration attempted to convene a Delta summit but there was a lack of local support for the initiative. In May 2008, a proposal was put forward to incorporate the armed militia into security companies so that they could then be gainfully employed to guard pipelines and other oil installations. However, this proposal was met with public skepticism and duly rejected by the armed militia. In September 2008, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs was established to bring a greater degree of focus on promoting development in the region. However, due to a limited budget and uncertainty with regards to the division of labour between the Ministry and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) this has undermined its overall efficacy. On 8 September 2008, the Nigerian Government established a Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, as part of its renewed effort to develop a coherent long-term strategy to resolve the tensions in the sub-region. The Technical Committee's Report recommended issuing an amnesty to the leadership of the armed militia within the context of 'a comprehensive demobilisation, disarmament and rehabilitation (DDR) programme; an increased allocation of oil revenue to the region; the urgent improvement of infrastructure and

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The 2009 Amnesty Programme led to thousands of militia giving up their weapons. However, renewed militancy does not augur well for peace and security in the region. Yar'Adua's absence may have temporarily slowed down the implementation of the post-Amnesty Programme, including the payment of stipends and re-training of former militants. However, the new Acting President Jonathan has pledged to build on the amnesty for the militants begun by President Yar'Adua. Whether this will appease the militant groups remains to be seen.

On 4 February 2010, the UN pledged its support for the Nigerian Government's Amnesty Programme through a mindset and technical education programme for ex-militia in the Niger Delta. The United Nations Office for Project Services

The Niger Delta Civil Society Coalition has called on the Rivers State Government and others State governments in the region to reassess their strategy in dealing with the crisis in the Region. The Coalition argues that the persistent reliance on military force to respond to militia and criminal violence are unlikely to address the underlying issues. Given the current circumstances in the region the Civil Society Coalition has appealed to the Federal government and the Niger Delta state governments to support a new strategic direction that would create a conducive environment for civil society to play a role in peacebuilding and reconstruction in the Region.

Peace, Security and the US Africa Command

Following the Fourteenth AU Summit, in early February 2010, the Commander of the United States (US) Africa Command, also known as AFRICOM, General William Ward visited the AU. General Ward met with the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, and announced that AFRICOM was willing to assist the AU in its peace and security efforts within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The visit was aimed at strengthening ties between AFRICOM and the AU as well as improving the Command's image on the continent - which is still viewed as a foreign combat force in Africa. General Ward also discussed the security situations in Sudan and Somalia and sought to re-emphasise that AFRICOM's military role was limited on the continent.

On 12 February 2010, three days after General Ward's official visit, Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, delivered his monthly press conference at the AU headquarters and noted that the issue of AFRICOM had never featured on the agenda of the AU Summit. Ping further noted that individual member states would adopt their own specific responses to AFRICOM and that the AU had not yet sought to have an institutional engagement with the Command. However, Ping acknowledged that the issue was currently the subject of discussion and debate in the diplomatic, public and academic spheres of the continent.

AFRICOM's evolution has followed an interesting trajectory. In 1995, the US Defense Department released a memorandum which boldly stated that 'America's security interests in Africa are very limited'

and that 'ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa'. Nevertheless, the past decade has witnessed a dramatic increase in the strategic importance of Africa, particularly due to the need to access oil and other natural resources, the increased incidents of terrorism and climate change challenges. These developments have compelled the US to revise its strategic involvement in Africa. The terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 altered the US' strategic foreign policy interests, which led to increased security, military and intelligence dimensions of US in Africa. The Horn of Africa and the Sahel region are in particular viewed as a potential safe havens for Al-Qaeda and other religious extremist groups.

It was within this strategic context that AFRICOM was launched in 2007. Initial criticisms noted that the launch of the Command initiated 'a militarisation of American diplomacy in Africa'. A number of pivotal AU member states, including key regional actors like Nigeria and South Africa, openly stated their skepticism about the Command's missions. AFRICOM, which is currently based in Stuttgart, Germany, with a staff complement of about 600 military personnel and 600 civilians hand indicated that it had no plans to relocate to Africa in a near and medium future. However, this has not decreased the suspicion around the ultimate objectives of the Command.

AFRICOM has repeatedly stated that its only objective is to work to promote the peace and security of the continent. In its mission statement, AFRICOM also stipulates that it wants to build the capacity of African national security institutions. One of the areas that the Command focuses on is security sector governance. This specific programme aims to improve

Civil Military Relations (CMR) and Civil Military Cooperation (CMC) initiatives in Africa by assisting in the development of a professional, legitimate, effective and democratically accountable African security institutions which support democratisation processes. The capacity building programme is also geared towards avoiding unconstitutional changes of government, confront terrorism, drug and weapons trafficking and enhancing humanitarian and development assistance. However, this commitment was questioned following AFRICOM's joint military exercise with the armed forces of Gabon, in September 2009, after the country had a disputed election which witnessed a crackdown against protesters. This particular intervention was broadly criticised because it seemed to have been driven by a desire to preserve US geo-strategic interests rather than lay a foundation for democratic consolidation. There is also the perception that the projection of US power in Somalia in pursuit of Al-Qaeda-linked extremists may have exposed AMISOM to further targeting.

However, AFRICOM's has also made a positive contribution. In 2008, the Command helped to deploy 1,600 Ugandan peacekeepers to Somalia and it has also participated in an airlift support of AU personnel to Darfur in the context of AU and NATO collaboration. There are clearly components of APSA that could collaborate and partner with AFRICOM on the basis of a genuine partnership. More specifically, the PSC can interface with AFRICOM on a range of post-conflict reconstruction issues.

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Peace, Security and the US Africa Command (continued)

Article 17 of the PSC Protocol provides the basis for the partnership and working relationship of the PSC with entities like AFRICOM. Article 17(4) stipulates that the Council shall cooperate and work closely with relevant international partners on issues of peace,

security and stability in Africa. The AU can also decide and determine how and whether it would want to engage with the Command. The advantage of this would be the harmonisation and coordination of all AU interactions with the Command. However, AFRICOM has a significant image problem, which

relates to how it was conceived and operationalised. Clearly, going forward, AFRICOM would need to engage in a more detailed process of consultation with its African partners to address this image problem.

Important Forthcoming Dates

1 April 2010 – inaugural meeting of the newly elected members of the PSC who were formally endorsed by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government during the 14th AU Summit held between 31 Jan – 2 Feb 2010

31 May to 11 June 2010 – International Criminal Court Review Conference, Kampala, Uganda

African Election Calendar for Next Six Months in 2010

Country	Election	Date
Burundi	Communal President National Assembly Senate (indirect) Colline	20 May 2010 28 June 2010 23 July 2010 28 July 2010 7 September 2010
Central African Republic	Presidential & National Assembly	March 2010
Côte d'Ivoire	President	Late February or early March 2010 (postponed from 29 November 2009)
Ethiopia	House of People's Representatives Regional State Councils	23 May 2010
Guinea-Bissau	President (1st round)	Postponed from 28 June 2009 to June 2010, due to the assassination of president
Kenya	Constitutional referendum	April 2010
Lesotho	Local Government	April 2010
Somaliland (autonomous region)	President House of Representatives Local Government	April 2010 September 2010 Late 2010
Sudan	President (1st round) National Assembly, Council of States Southern Sudan President (1st round) Southern Sudan Assembly, State Legislatures, State Governors, Local Government	11-19 April 2010 (postponed from July 2009)
Togo	President	28 February 2010
Tunisia	Local Government	May 2010

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This Report is published through the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Government of Denmark, the Foundation Open Society Institute, and the Humanity United Foundation. In addition, the Institute for Security Studies receives core support from the Governments of Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands.

As a leading African human security research institution, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) works towards a stable and peaceful Africa characterised by sustainable development, human rights, the rule of law, democracy and collaborative security and gender mainstreaming.

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