



# Peace & Security Council Report

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## Marking the 1 000<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) celebrated its 1 000<sup>th</sup> meeting on 25 May this year. This coincides with the annual Africa Day celebration to mark the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

The PSC was created in 2004 and has since vastly increased its scope of work and efforts to ensure a more peaceful continent. As the highest decision-making body on peace and security between summits of the AU Assembly, the PSC has a crucial role to play in fast-evolving situations such as unconstitutional changes of government and the mandating of African Union (AU) peacekeeping missions.

From initially sticking to its mandatory two meetings per month, the 15-member PSC has grown into a very active AU institution with a full agenda of meetings and activities. Field visits to strife-torn countries have been added to this agenda, resembling the work of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which annually tours African states where the UN is deployed.

As the highest decision-making body on peace and security between summits of the AU Assembly, the PSC has a crucial role to play

Yet there have also been low points and instances of grave discord. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on the efficiency of the PSC's work owing to meetings' largely still taking place remotely. Crucial elements of the PSC Protocol such as the operationalisation of the PSC subcommittees are also still outstanding.

As it meets for a 1 000<sup>th</sup> time, the PSC will have to take stock of its achievements, the challenges it has faced, and the opportunities for it to play a stronger role in addressing conflicts and crises on the continent.

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### Current PSC Chairperson

**HE Salah Francis Elhamdi**,  
ambassador of Algeria to Ethiopia  
and permanent representative to the  
African Union.

### PSC members

Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon,  
Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia,  
Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi,  
Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal

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### Membership of the PSC over the years

In its 17 years of existence, certain countries have served on the PSC for much longer periods than others. Of the five major contributors to the AU, Nigeria is the only one that has been a member of the PSC uninterrupted since 2004. This is largely owing to an unwritten rule in Western Africa – the most populous of Africa's five regions – that Nigeria should occupy one of its four seats on the PSC.

South Africa, in contrast, served for a long stretch from 2004–2012, benefiting from the role played by former president Thabo Mbeki in creating the institution, but then stepped down to serve two consecutive two-year terms from 2014–2018. It has insisted on respecting the rotation of Southern



African member states, to the point of stepping back in favour of a small country like Lesotho, elected for a three-year term in 2019.

Admittedly, serving as AU chair, a non-permanent member of the UNSC and on the PSC in 2020 would have been a lot for one country, but it means South Africa stays off the council for three years.

Algeria has served for a total of 14 years – one two-year and four three-year terms – since 2004 and is still on the council. It stepped down in 2018 to give Morocco a two-year term. This was the first ever mandate on the council for the North African country that rejoined the AU in 2017 after having left the OAU in 1984.

Finally, Egypt, also one of the main contributors to the AU budget, served for seven years from 2006–2019 and was re-elected for a two-year term in February 2020.

Other countries that have served for long periods on the PSC include Ethiopia, which served a total of eight years until 2016 and rejoined in 2020 for a further two-year term. Libya served for seven years until 2016. However, since the demise of strongman Muammar Ghaddafi in 2011 the country has not been able to play as powerful a role it did in the first years of the existence of the PSC.

The idea of a ‘big five’ of leading countries driving change on the continent on peace and security matters never really gained traction. Policymakers such as Mbeki have been outspoken about not ‘recreating a UNSC’ at the AU, precisely because Africa has long objected to this unfair system of allowing the five permanent members (P5) veto power.

However, others believe such a role could allow certain initiatives – such as financing the AU Peace Fund and cooperating with other AU organs – to progress at a faster pace. It could also ensure greater continuity and coherence in the work of the PSC.

### **The divide between the PSC ambassadors and heads of state – the case of Burundi**

A major blow to the PSC’s ability to intervene in a crisis came in January 2016 when its decision of 17 December 2015 to send a force to Burundi, the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), was shot down by PSC heads of state.

#### **Fact box**

The first meeting of the PSC took place on 18 March 2004 with a discussion on the situation in Sudan and the creation of the African Mission for Sudan (AMIS) following a peace agreement in April 2004. The other meetings in that month were about Burundi, where the AU had deployed its first military peacekeeping force, the AU Force for Burundi (AMIB), soon to be taken over by the UN. The third PSC meeting was about Côte d’Ivoire, at the time in the grips of an insurgency.

This was after Burundi complained that using Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act to intervene in its domestic matters went against the principles of sovereignty and consensus so dear to the AU.

The fact that PSC ambassadors in Addis Ababa had made a decision that was reversed by the heads of state of these same PSC countries, within only a few weeks, revealed serious flaws in the system.

Some believed the PSC was following ‘instructions’ from the AU Peace and Security Department (PSD), rather than that the PSD served as a secretariat for the PSC. For several months after this incident, the PSC shied away from any robust discussions about crises in specific member states.

### **The idea of a ‘big five’ of leading countries driving change on the continent on peace and security matters never gained traction**

This incident was also a blow to the AU Commission. Former AU commissioner for peace and security Smail Chergui and AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma had travelled to Burundi at the time and believed drastic action was needed to put a stop to the violence in the country.

A fact-finding mission by the AU Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights had also found that Burundi’s citizens were victims of grave human rights abuses perpetrated by the regime of former president Pierre Nkurunziza, who was running for a third term. However,



the intervention was shot down and no such actions have been considered since then.

### **Coordination with the UN, EUPSC**

Coordination with similar institutions such as the UNSC and the European Union Politics and Security Committee (EUPSC) has improved over the years thanks to statutory meetings and mutual agreements. Greater coordination between the PSC and the three African non-permanent members of the UNSC (A3) has also helped to improve PSC–UNSC collaboration.

However, a lot of friction still exists. With the EU this is often around the fact that the PSC tends to shy away from discussing burning issues and from ‘naming and shaming’ member states guilty of abuse and democratic backsliding, preferring a focus on thematic issues. The EU, on the other hand, is often keen to deal with crises more directly.

The PSC's hesitation regarding Chad could create a precedent and weaken its strong stance against coups

Funding peacekeeping operations through UN assessed contributions is also a perpetual sticking point in the relations between the PSC and the UNSC. The position of the PSC and the AU has been that the UN is primarily responsible for global peace – if Africa is providing peacekeepers it expects the wider international community to ensure predictable funding for these missions.

### **The PSC and unconstitutional changes of government**

One of the major roles of the PSC is to deliberate on unconstitutional changes of government and to decide on eventual sanctions when coups d'état are perpetrated. This has happened on many occasions since the adoption of the Lomé Convention against unconstitutional changes of government in 2000.

However, the PSC's current hesitation regarding Chad could create a precedent and weaken its strong stance against coups. This also links to the fact that the PSC has struggled to play an effective role in conflict prevention, focusing instead on either thematic issues or ongoing conflict situations. At times, it has simply been mute on certain conflicts.

At the next AU summit in February 2022, 15 new members of the PSC will be elected.

These new members will be faced with the challenge of ensuring that the PSC fulfils its mandate – not only to react to crises when they have already escalated but to act effectively when there are warning signs of impending crises.

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December  
2015

THE PSC DECIDES TO  
INTERVENE IN BURUNDI

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# The AU reneges on its stance against coups d'état

The PSC met on 14 May to discuss the situation in Chad for the second time since the unexpected death of former president and self-declared 'Marshal of Chad' Idriss Déby.

At this meeting the PSC, after examining the report submitted by its fact-finding mission to Ndjamena and following lengthy discussions, decided against suspending Chad from the AU or imposing individual sanctions.

Instead, the PSC in fact endorsed the Transitional Military Council (TMC) 18-month plan to restore constitutional order.

While this decision might have been based on Chad's specific circumstances, it still runs contrary to the values for which the AU purportedly stands. It also contradicts its previous decisions in similar situations.

## Power grab by the TMC

Following the dramatic events that saw the death of Déby on 20 April and the takeover by the TMC, the PSC decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to N'djamena. This mission was tasked with looking into the situation on the ground and shedding light on the circumstances of Déby's death.

He is believed to have died as a result of injuries sustained at the battlefield, where he was leading his troops against the rebellion by the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (*Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad* [FACT]).

The TMC's power grab has violated Article 81 of the Chadian constitution. This provides for the president of the National Assembly to act as interim president in such circumstances and for elections to happen within 45–90 days after the position's becoming vacant.

The TMC instead dissolved the National Assembly and the government, and suspended the constitution. It assumed total power to lead the 18-month transition, with the possibility of extending this for another term. It also appointed a civilian prime minister, a position abolished in 2018.

While Western and African governments unanimously and strongly deplored the FACT attacks, the move by

the TMC has not been condemned in the same terms. Various governments merely 'took note' of the creation of the TMC.

## Caught between principle and pragmatism

During its first meeting on Chad, the PSC, which is usually consistent in adopting a strict position on military seizures of power, simply expressed its 'serious concern' over the creation of the TMC and 'urged' the military to restore constitutional order.

In its statement it noted the relevant texts in this regard – the AU Constitutive Act, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of governments. It thus recognised that the seizure of power by the TMC was unconstitutional.

The council did not, however, follow through on the logical consequences from this observation, which should have resulted in the outright suspension of Chad from the AU or a strict deadline for the junta to hand over power.

## The current transitional arrangement gives overwhelming authority to the head of the TMC

The May 14 meeting also did not lead to the suspension of the country and/or any sanctions. In fact, the PSC *de facto* endorsed the Chadian junta's transition plan and its appointment of a hand-picked civilian prime minister.

The PSC did, however, state that an extension of the transition period would not be accepted, and nor would members of the TMC be allowed to contest the post-transition elections.

Clearly, the PSC's call for the TMC to focus on military and security issues – and for the transitional civilian government to organise a national dialogue and prepare



for elections – does not take into account the reality of power dynamics on the ground. It also does not consider the distribution of power under the roadmap announced by the TMC.

The current transitional arrangement gives overwhelming authority to the head of the TMC over the other transitional institutions, including the government. Whether TMC members will agree not to run in the upcoming elections is also not a given, as Mahamat

Idriss Déby Itno was promoted to head the transition with the view of his replacing his father in time.

The PSC's decision on Chad contrasts sharply with its previous positions which, since the adoption of the Lomé Declaration in 2000, almost mechanically applied the mechanism suspending soldiers who seize power. In fact, the PSC has suspended any state where the military or armed groups have clearly grabbed power over the past 20 years.

**Table 1: Countries suspended by the AU since 2003**

Country	Nature of the change in power	Date	PSC decision
Central African Republic	François Bozizé, with the help of mercenaries, overthrows president André Kolingba	March 2003	Immediate suspension
Togo	At the death of Gnassingbé Eyadema, Faure Gnassingbé comes to power with the support of the military and after a controversial revision of the constitution	February 2005	Immediate suspension (Prior to the PSC decision, Togo was suspended by ECOWAS, which also imposed sanctions on Togolese authorities)
Mauritania	A military junta led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall overthrows president Maaouiya Ould Taya	August 2005	Immediate suspension
Mauritania	Sidi Ould Cheick Abdallahi is overthrown by Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, head of the presidential guard	August 2008	Immediate suspension
Guinea	Captain Moussa Dadis Camara takes power following the death of Lansana Conté	December 2008	Suspension within five days at a second meeting of the PSC on Guinea
Madagascar	Part of the army overthrows president Marc Ravalomanana and brings Andry Rajoelina to power	March 2009	Immediate suspension
Niger	Mamadou Tandja is overthrown by soldiers	February 2010	Immediate suspension
Mali	Soldiers overthrow president Amani Toumani Touré	March 2012	Immediate suspension
Guinea-Bissau	Soldiers overthrow interim president Raimundo Pereira	April 2012	Immediate suspension
Central African Republic	Rebels overthrow president François Bozizé	March 2013	Immediate suspension and sanctions
Egypt	Soldiers led by Marshal Abdel Fattah el-Sisi overthrow president Mohamed Morsi	July 2013	Immediate suspension



Country	Nature of the change in power	Date	PSC decision
Burkina Faso	General Gilbert Diendéré and elements under his command briefly overthrow transitional president Michel Kafando	September 2015	Immediate suspension and sanctions
Sudan	The military deposes president Omar al-Bashir following months of public protests against the regime	April 2019	Delayed suspension: the PSC initially gave the military two weeks to hand over power to civilians. The deadline was subsequently extended to 60 days. Following protests and the killing of civilians, the PSC suspended Sudan about three weeks before the new deadline.
Mali	Soldiers depose president Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta following several weeks of public protests against the regime	August 2020	Immediate suspension

Even when the relevant sub-regional organisation has not condemned the coup or taken the lead, the AU has almost always pronounced itself decisively – as it did after the overthrow of Blaise Compaore in Burkina Faso in 2014. While the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) did not immediately take a firm stand, the PSC gave the military two weeks to hand over power to a civilian government, which it did. Burkina Faso was not suspended from the AU at the time.

The latitude granted to the Chadian TMC places the AU at odds with its own principles. It tarnishes its reputation as a strict enforcer of constitutionalism in Africa and sets a damaging precedent for the existing continental norm against unconstitutional changes of government.

### Why was the Chadian junta given so much time?

The AU opted for a solution that would give the Chadian TMC ample time to work on restoring constitutional order. The considerations that influenced this choice are, it seems, largely around security.

The PSC notes in its 14 May statement that Chad has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism in the Sahel and in the Lake Chad Basin. It also serves, by virtue of its geographical position, as a natural barrier

which, if it were to give way, would further expose West Africa, and even Central Africa, to the chaos emanating from Libya.

The security of Chad and that of the various regions, therefore, appears to have taken precedence over adherence to the principle of rejecting unconstitutional changes of government.

### The latitude granted to the Chadian TMC places the AU at odds with its own principles

Although the PSC also gave Burkina Faso (2014) and Sudan (2019) time, this came with strict requirements to restore constitutional order within two weeks of the first communiqué issued by the council. In the case of Sudan, national and regional security considerations were also discussed, but this did not dissuade the PSC from clearly and immediately asking the military to relinquish power to civilian authorities.

### Coups a symptom of poor governance

While the AU has worked hard to disincentivise coups and other forms of unconstitutional changes



Map 1: Chad



of government, it has not done enough to eradicate their root causes. It should therefore consider broadening the definition of an unconstitutional change of government.

Election tampering and constitutional amendments by incumbents to stay in power have created the conditions that delegitimise certain heads of state. This fuels attempts to find other means to remove authoritarian and longstanding regimes.

The AU cannot afford to waver on applying the crucial norms it has established and for which it has been cherished

The AU has to become more responsive and involved in the management of these fundamental problems and not simply pronounce itself only when an unconstitutional change of government occurs. Dealing with the material conditions that lead to military and other kinds of takeovers will yield better and longer-term results for peace and stability on the continent.

As much as it has to be practical, the AU cannot afford to waver on applying the crucial norms it has established and for which it has been cherished. The TMC in Chad should not be granted leniency that it does not deserve at the expense of upholding the norm against unconstitutional changes of government across the continent. Such a move could undo gains in Africa's efforts to address the scourge of unconstitutional changes of government.

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April 2021

MILITARY TAKEOVER  
IN CHAD

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# The Somali political crisis calls into question its transitional plan

The government of Somalia and a number of its federal states have been holding critical talks since 22 May 2021 to help resolve the country's political crisis.

The African Union (AU), meanwhile, has been spearheading international efforts in Somalia. This is despite the fact that the Somali government has rejected the AU's special envoy, former president John Dramani Mahama of Ghana.

The AU endorsed Somalia's transitional plan in 2018 and is still well placed to support Somali stakeholders to overcome their differences through dialogue. It can also help Somalia to develop a more robust transitional plan, which is currently under review, in order to solve structural governance and political problems related to the politicisation and militarisation of clans going forward. This is in addition to the support the AU has been providing to the election process.

The AU should also fast-track the development of its peace and security strategy for Somalia, to guide the continental body's engagement following the drawdown of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by the end of 2021.

## Crisis around the president's term of office

Tensions have been mounting following an attempt in April to extend the term of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmajo) by two years. This led to armed confrontation in the capital Mogadishu between supporters of the president and clan-affiliated opposition groups. The confrontation is an indication of the extent to which the political crisis has escalated following delayed parliamentary and presidential elections, which were expected to be held in early 2021.

The political crisis and ensuing confrontation between clan-affiliated factions in the armed forces has been a significant setback for Somalia's transitional plan. It also calls into question the feasibility of drawing down AMISOM by the end of the year.

The stand-off between members of the political elite and their respective supporters in the army shows that the planned creation of a professional army before handing over AMISOM's security responsibilities to Somali forces is yet to be realised. This is of great concern not only

for Somalis but also for AMISOM, troop-contributing countries in the region, and other partners supporting the fight against al-Shabaab.

The ongoing revision of the transitional plan should therefore focus on building a viable political system and public institutions, as well as drafting a consensus-based national constitution. So far military arrangements have attracted the most attention.

## What caused Somalia's election crisis?

Somalia's political crisis flared up when the country missed a second deadline for legislative and presidential elections planned before the end of the government's term in office in February 2021. This was a major setback for the agreement reached on 17 September 2020 between the government and federal member states on the way forward for indirect elections, whereby clans select members of the Lower House of Parliament (House of the People), which in turn chooses the president.

In accordance with the agreement, legislative and presidential elections were scheduled for December 2020 and February 2021 respectively. Since these never took place, opposition groups have accused the government of ruling without a legitimate mandate and have asked for the president to step down. They want a transitional government to be established.

## Opposition groups have accused the government of ruling without a legitimate mandate

The crisis escalated in April 2021, when Somalia's Lower House voted to extend the president's and its own term for an additional two years.

Somalia's Upper House (Senate) rejected the Lower House's decision. It was also criticised by the United Nations, the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on



Development (IGAD) and the European Union. In a joint statement, they called on Somali stakeholders to return to dialogue on the basis of the 17 September agreement.

Parliament likewise annulled the controversial bill in May, and reverted to the agreement reached by political actors in September 2020 to guide elections.

The president then appointed Prime Minister Mohamed Roble to take the lead in solving the political stand-off and prepare for peaceful and credible elections.

### Outstanding issues

There are a number of outstanding issues related to the 17 September 2020 agreement, which is guiding the ongoing election-related negotiations.

The first is the continued military stand-off between the federal government and a few federal member states that have asked that forces aligned with the federal government be removed from their regions. This will have security repercussions, given the continued threat of al-Shabaab and the ongoing struggle to reclaim large areas of central and southern Somalia currently controlled by the group.

While voting will take place in Mogadishu, Somalilanders are divided in their support for the president and opposition groups

Secondly, federal member states want the two election stations per region, as stipulated in the 17 September agreement, to be reduced to one per region, based in an area over which they have more authority. This will give them greater control of the members of Parliament (MPs) representing their region and selected by the clans.

The third major issue is the composition of the 11-member technical committee appointed to help solve the political crisis. Most of the members are not regarded as neutral by federal member states and other political actors. This will have significant implications for public buy-in to the pre-election negotiations.

The fourth critical point of contention is the election of Somaliland MPs for the 57 seats in Parliament. While voting will take place in Mogadishu, Somalilanders are divided in their support for the president and opposition groups. The representatives will also not be recognised by the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland.

The September agreement is further criticised for stipulating that those competing for a seat in the Lower or Upper House have to pay US\$10 000 or US\$20 000 respectively. Observers argue the exorbitant amount will make government seats exclusive to wealthy elites and/or those who can successfully mobilise local and international sponsors in exchange for political favours.

The significant budget and security required to undertake the elections are additional issues to address.

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February  
2021

FARMAJO'S TERM  
EXPIRED

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## **Danger of continued political stand-off**

A failure by the government and federal member states to find a political solution to the election crisis could reignite armed confrontation between the clans, which has already created divisions in the army.

Beyond the election, Somalia's current political crisis has laid bare the structural challenges facing the country. Clan-based political mobilisation and militarisation, which in recent years has been contained from completely destabilising the country through elite bargaining, has unravelled during the current political crisis.

This threatens not only the significant progress made in establishing a legitimate government through political negotiation and compromise, but also the hard-earned stability that has made such a government possible in Somalia.

One of the priorities of Somalia's transitional plan is to strengthen the ability of security institutions to undertake coordinated operations, which will not be possible if the army is divided along clan lines.

Given the threats Somalia and the wider region continue to face from al-Shabaab, and the planned drawdown of AMISOM by the end of 2021, the current division and infighting in Somalia's army could lead to a much worsening security situation, with direct implications for the whole region.

## **The future of Somalia's transition plan**

Clearly, implementing the September agreement is only a temporary fix for a much deeper governance challenge facing the country.

The ongoing revision of Somalia's transitional plan should therefore be expanded to not only address security concerns but also structural peace and security challenges. This can help ensure political discord does not trigger a clan-based military confrontation leading to a civil war.

The one-person one-vote model, adopted in 2020 but later rejected by regional member states, was expected to help overcome the politicisation of clans as the only avenue to power and representation in the legislature and government. While the one-person one-vote model may help overcome some issue related to clan-based politics, it is not a panacea for Somalia's governance woes.

Building national institutions, drafting a permanent constitution and putting in place federal arrangements should be given as much, if not more, attention as support to the military during the revision of the transitional plan.

The AU has an important role to play in this regard, as it has already been supporting these processes. It should expedite the appointment of another envoy that is acceptable to both the government and federal member states. In addition to helping Somali stakeholders overcome election-related differences, the envoy can play an important role in assisting the continental body to articulate its political engagement and Somalia strategy beyond 2021.

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2021  
THE PLANNED  
DRAWDOWN OF AMISOM

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## Does Africa need its own humanitarian agency?

**Humanitarian crises in Africa are becoming more frequent and complex. Amid climate change, political instability and conflict, COVID-19 has worsened an already dire situation.**

To mitigate these threats, the African Union (AU) has created a number of instruments. These include the Africa Risk Capacity (ARC), focusing on the response to natural disasters and extreme weather conditions; the Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC) to respond to public health emergencies; and the Humanitarian Policy Framework (HPF) and Special Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF), for humanitarian relief.

A decision has also been made to set up the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA), but this has not been implemented yet.

Funding for these instruments remains problematic, however.

The SEAF, for example, is far from being adequately financed. By the end of 2018, it had only US\$ 2 903 327 and very few contributions have been made since then. In this regard, the government of Equatorial Guinea offered to host a continental humanitarian summit and pledging conference, likely to take place in the second half of 2021. The aim of the pledging conference is to replenish SEAF funds and address the dire humanitarian crises facing Africa, taking into account the impact of COVID-19.

The ARC is also struggling, since only 34 AU member states are signatories to the ARC memorandum of understanding and even fewer contribute financially. An Executive Council decision has proposed the development of new sources of disaster risk financing, as well as the inclusion of threats such as disease outbreaks, since the current structure of the ARC does not accommodate new and emerging humanitarian threats.

The task ahead for the AU, regional economic communities (RECs) and member states is to come to terms with the magnitude of the humanitarian challenges facing the continent, and the resultant risks and vulnerabilities. Particularly in the COVID-19 era, the manner in which Africa deals with humanitarian crises will directly impact countries' recovery and resilience.

### COVID-19 puts AU instruments to the test

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has escalated existing humanitarian problems. Unprecedented border closures and movement restrictions have compelled organisations and governments to adapt their efforts to help refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs).

AU Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat, together with AU Chair President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, established the AU COVID-19 Response Fund to strengthen the continental response to COVID-19. The Africa CDC also provided policy guidance to governments, taking into account the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs.

Still, the AU has limited capacity and the continent faces a myriad on-going and emerging conflicts.

### Increasing number of IDPs

The number of IDPs is rising amid climatic shocks, natural disasters, disease and conflict. In the East Africa region, for example, there are currently more than 8.3 million IDPs and more than 4.6 million refugees. This is primarily owing to conflict in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In Mozambique there are over 1 million IDPs because of the ongoing conflict in the north of the country, coupled with climate disasters in recent years. In Central and West Africa approximately 2.1 million people were affected by floods at the end of 2020, with many regions continuing to experience excess rainfall.

The combined effects of these humanitarian challenges are straining the capacity of affected governments to respond effectively and build resilience.

### Institutional pillars for effective responses to humanitarian crises

At the January 2016 summit, the AU Assembly endorsed a recommendation to establish the AfHA to streamline humanitarian action on the continent. Since this



decision, several meetings have been held to discuss the way forward, but no conclusive structure has been set up yet. The financial implications of such an initiative are also not clear.

This decision is laudable and shows that the AU recognises that more needs to be done in response to humanitarian challenges. However, the question remains whether the AfHA is the answer to addressing the increasing complexities and changing landscape of such humanitarian challenges.

As noted, the AU already has institutions and policy frameworks guiding humanitarian efforts on the continent. Within the AU Commission, the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division has been instrumental in strategic policy formulation and in the development of key humanitarian instruments. These include the Kampala Convention and the African Humanitarian Policy Framework. It also works closely with the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs and the PRC Sub-Committee on the SEAF.

### The question remains whether the AfHA is the answer to addressing the increasing complexities and changing landscape of humanitarian challenges

The changing dynamics of natural disasters, threats to livelihoods, rising terrorism and violent extremism, and disease outbreaks on the continent require a comprehensive approach and new strategies. The creation of a new structure will not solve the underlying issues.

The biggest problems are a lack of sustainable financing, poor coordination within and between established structures, lack of implementation of existing normative frameworks and lack of commitment by member states.

### The way forward in handling humanitarian crises

In order to inform sound policy and practical responses to humanitarian crises in Africa, the AU does not need to create another institution. Rather, it needs to evaluate the existing institutions responsible for humanitarian interventions. Such an evaluation should highlight the institutional gaps that need attention and create room for better analysis in trying to find sustainable solutions for effective prevention and early response.

As noted, financing humanitarian interventions is a challenge. Currently, 80% of the AU's programme budget is financed by the European Union, and 100% of the peace operations budget by external actors. The AU thus needs to explore new funding opportunities, especially in the face of declining humanitarian assistance from traditional partners and growing donor fatigue.

A new financing model is imperative – one that considers raising funds from within the continent, focusing on non-traditional donors such as the private sector and African philanthropists.

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MEMBERS OF THE AFRICA  
RISK CAPACITY

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## ***PSC Interview: ‘The EU’s engagement is built on finding African solutions’*** **– EU ambassador**

EU–AU multilateralism in response to the world’s most pressing peace and security issues has been on the agenda of both institutions for some time. The *PSC Report* spoke to Birgitte Markussen, European Union (EU) ambassador to the African Union (AU).

### **What are the mechanisms for an EU–AU joint response to peace and security challenges in Africa, especially in addressing the root causes of conflicts?**

The EU’s engagement is built on the ‘African solutions for African challenges’ concept, which remains the basis of our support, including addressing the root causes of conflicts. The new European Peace Facility (EPF) won’t change on the importance given to African solutions.

The major change ahead is that the EPF aims to allow for more flexibility in the capacity to address the whole range of the conflict management cycle. As a new element, the EPF will include the option of lethal equipment purchase when necessary.

Following the fifth AU–EU Summit in 2017 in Abidjan, ‘Strengthen Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance’ remained one of the four priorities of the Abidjan Declaration. In practical terms, this has been further developed in a Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission (AUC) and the EU on peace, security and governance signed on 23 May 2018.

### **Strengthen Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance remained one of the four priorities of the Abidjan Declaration**

This intends to strengthen cooperation between the AUC and EU and spells out a large number of potential activities in different areas and at different levels (including mediation, conflict prevention, countering terrorism/countering violent extremism, governance, etc.). This sums up the overarching institutional framework for our cooperation.

### **What are the tools developed to ensure joint responses to peace and security challenges?**

The African Peace Facility (APF) is probably the more ‘known’ instrument, which has been operational since 2004 with a total direct support in the area of peace and security amounting to EUR 3.5 billion. Most notably, the APF has been used to support operations such as AMISOM in helping bring

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EUR  
3.5 billion  
EU SUPPORT SINCE 2004

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stability to Somalia. You will notice that I use the past tense here as both these instruments are coming to an end.

Taken together, all these declarations and instruments allow the EU and AU to coordinate politically and implement joint actions. This can be at the purely political level, as was recently the case in Somalia, where the EU, the AU, the UN [United Nations] and IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] have shown closely aligning positions and issued joint statements in support of a return to dialogue. While it is too early to tell where the current crisis is going in Somalia, the fact that all multilateral organisations of the region have joined forces to speak with one political voice, is a watershed moment. Under the leadership of the AU, the EU is supporting African solutions to African problems. It is the blueprint for continued political cooperation.

At the more practical level, I would also like to point towards our African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Support Programme, where the EU has been supporting the capacity building of the APSA. This has supported the development of early warning capabilities, as well as the AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development strategies such as in the Lake Chad Basin. At the moment we are also working with the AU to support the development of a Human Rights Compliance Framework for African Peace Support Operations (PSOs). A crucial element in the discussion related to UN funding of African PSOs.

Under the leadership of the AU, the EU is supporting African solutions to African problems. It is the blueprint for continued political cooperation

These are only a few examples of our joint responses, and if we widen the net to look at addressing root causes, we can take into account all the joint work we do with the AU on, for example, supporting economic integration and opportunities (through the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area [AfCFTA]), green and digital transition and human development. The scope of our cooperation is indeed all encompassing. It is only limited by our imagination and, obviously, political support.

For this reason, it's important to look forward to our next summit, where the AU and EU leaders will give a new impetus to our cooperation to show that effective multilateralism is the only positive answer to the world's most pressing peace and security issues.

### **What experiences have been gained from the implementation of the African Peace Facility?**

Many technical and financial audits and evaluations have underlined major results related to the APF. The last one, conducted by the EU Court of Auditors in 2018, firstly stressed the necessity of closer cooperation with African partners in the design phase of our support programmes. Secondly,

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Postponed  
in 2020  
THE NEXT EU-AU SUMMIT

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it stressed the need for stronger focus, as some of the earlier engagements may have been spread too thinly in many areas. Thirdly, it showed that more action is required in the field of prevention and mediation.

Along the AUC reforms, a programme-oriented approach focussing on results has been adopted. We have also learned that having the necessary AU-funded core staff in the various priority peace and security areas is essential to ensure AU delivery. Following the experience gained, the EPF, which will replace the APF, provides an opening to other instances than the AUC for the programme implementation – which means widening the possibilities of initiatives.

### **How is the support the EU provides Africa different under the European Peace Facility as compared to the African Peace Facility?**

With a confirmed global allocation of EUR 5 billion, the EPF will enhance the ability of the EU to prevent conflicts and strengthen international peace and security cooperation, not limited to the African continent. The EPF will continue to support African PSOs for the coming period (2021–2027), allowing rapid resources to support early responses and providing military support. As a new element, the EPF will include the option of lethal equipment purchase when necessary.

We have learned that having the necessary AU-funded core staff in the various priority peace and security areas is essential to ensure AU delivery

More dedicated to the military component of the security aspect of crises, the EPF will also encapsulate our EU funding to EU CSDP missions and operations (like EUTM, EUCAP, Atalanta). One of the EPF mechanisms foresees Assistance Measures that can take the shape of a global programme, which would allow a stable continued specific allocation for our work with the AU and its PSOs, along the same principles of the APF.

### **How will the EU continue to support the African Peace and Security Architecture?**

The APSA IV programme has been redesigned for a period of five years (2020–2024) with an approved budget of more than EUR 40 million. This funding – issued from the APF – is secured and will be maintained to the end of its contract. The EU believes that the African architecture put in place by the AUC Protocol is still very valid and we are still totally committed to support any kind of evolution, pending African aspirations under the overall framework of ‘Silencing the Guns’.

The new APSA support programme focuses on prevention and early warning, further operationalising the African Standby Force to current needs, reinforcing the cooperation and sharing of experience between all APSA stakeholders (AUC, RECs [regional economic communities], RMs [regional mechanisms]). Furthermore, the new APSA expands the engagement of civil

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EUR  
40 million

FUNDING FOR APSA  
TO 2024

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society and youth. Unlike in the past, the support targets programmatic expenses rather than recurrent (staff) costs.

### **What will be the focus of the next EU–AU annual meeting and when will it be held?**

The aim is to move one further step deeper into our partnership. This should be the result of an engaged discussion involving heads of state and government from both continents. In March 2020, the EU (HR/VP and Commission) issued a joint communication proposing five partnership priorities with Africa (green transition, digital, economic development, including trade, peace, security and governance, as well as migration and mobility).

We look forward to a similar proposal from our African partners in relation to the EU, in order for the two parties to agree on common objectives

From the EU's perspective, these priorities constitute a firm basis for the summit, in addition to the overarching partnership on addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to a similar proposal from our African partners in relation to the EU, in order for the two parties to agree on common objectives based on reciprocal interests; very much along the lines of the AU's flagship projects of continental integration, resonating with the African vision presented in the AU's Agenda 2063.

One of the main questions is how to foster discussions beyond financial contributions into a deeper political dialogue about shared interests, and enhanced visibility among the populations of both continents. The EU as a peer multilateral and continental integration organisation considers itself as a close partner of the AU in those endeavours, building on its active role through sharing of experiences and providing support.

### **What are the challenges to be overcome for the two continents to continue building a partnership based on equity and mutual respect?**

Before going into challenges, I would actually first like to emphasise the opportunities that exist to build on our partnership. For this I refer again to the Joint Communication: 'Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa'. In it, we describe the focus of those opportunities: (i) green transition and energy access; (ii) digital transformation; (iii) sustainable growth and jobs; (iv) peace and governance; and (v) migration and mobility.

Since the pandemic, we have also added health and COVID-19 recovery to these five; what I call the 5+1 partnerships. There will be challenges, but there is political will to strengthen our partnership. In our partnership, it is important to communicate so that Africans and Europeans realise the importance of closer cooperation between the two continents.

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## EU priorities

GREEN AND DIGITAL  
TRANSITION

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

PEACE, SECURITY,  
GOVERNANCE

MIGRATION

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Indeed, I am deeply convinced that Europe and Africa, as close partners, have everything to gain in working together on an increasing number of domains – be it in the political and security realm (peace and security, governance), on migration and mobility, on green and digital transition, or on economic and trade integration. Common interests as well as values unite us. The AfCFTA is among those projects offering tremendous potential to the African continent and the African people. As it is intrinsically linked to the DNA of the EU, the EU is already engaged in supporting the process and is determined to continue doing so.

An African continent where countries do business together and is increasingly interconnected is in the interest of the EU, as it will provide more opportunities for our intercontinental integration. There is important scope to working together in other multilateral frameworks within the UN on a broad range of issues.

Europe and Africa, as close partners, have everything to gain in working together on an increasing number of domains

If we look at the challenges facing our continents (if not the world), then one quickly realises that we can only tackle those if we work together. This is the strength of multilateralism. I'm sure there are those who would prefer to see the AU or EU fail, to strengthen their relative bilateral weight and impose their will on the 'weaker' or 'smaller'. However, there is much more to be gained from working together.

The pandemic has taught us this at yet another level. In this situation, the EU has shown itself as the primary partner of Africa in supporting vaccination supply (through COVAX) and recovery in a true spirit of the 'Team Europe'; with the EU and our member states. Not with heavily mediated token gestures, but with delivery of concrete vaccine doses, support to Africa CDC [Centres for Disease Control] leadership and by helping vaccine roll-out.

This brings me to one of the challenges I would like to highlight to continue building our partnership: communication. Both the AU and EU are doing a lot together. However, communication of our efforts to our citizens is lacking. This gives the wrong impression of ivory towers. We must dare to be bold in our communication and bring our story to the outside world. There is so much to be proud of!

I would like to end with a thought on our shared future. There are those who want to keep Europe and Africa's relationship rooted in history and the wrongs inflicted. While it is important to recognise past atrocities, learn from it and correct mistakes, it is also important to recognise that this narrative has only one goal: to divide Europe and Africa. The EU wants to look to the future, together with Africa. Our fates are inextricably linked. By teaming up, Europe and Africa can together be a multilateral beacon for the future and the world.

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AfCFTA

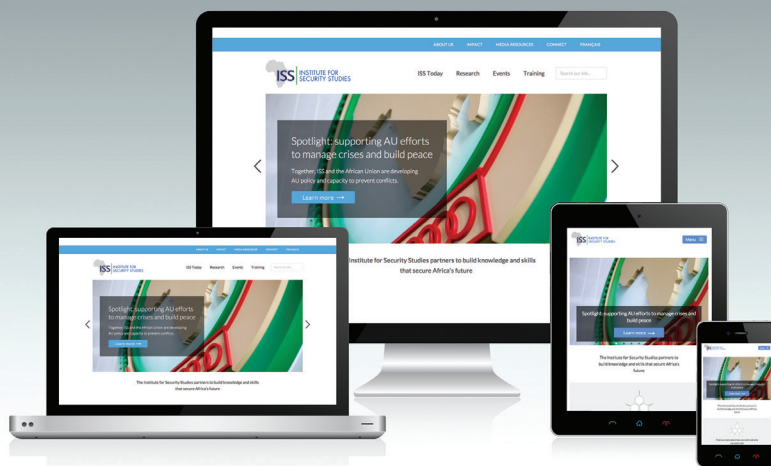
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The *Peace and Security Council Report* analyses developments and decisions at the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). The monthly publication is the only one of its kind dedicated to providing current analysis of the PSC's work. It is written by a team of ISS analysts in Addis Ababa.

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