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On the Agenda

PSC visit to Guinea-Bissau comes at the right time

The PSC travelled to Guinea-Bissau last month to get a first-hand impression of the institutional crisis in the country and to meet the various actors. Experts warn, however, that any decisions by the African Union (AU) should be made in close consultation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Guinea-Bissau was on the right track towards stability and democratisation after the coup d'état in 2012 when disaster struck again in mid-2015. A dispute between President Jose Mário Vaz and Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira has led to serious divisions in the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and threatened to derail the political and institutional stability of the country.

Guinea-Bissau was on the right track when disaster struck again in mid-2015

The international community plays a crucial role in forcing the various actors in Guinea-Bissau to stick to the country's constitution and find a way to work together despite their differences. If not, the country could risk another coup d'état.

The main actor in the efforts to stabilise the coup-ridden country has been the regional bloc ECOWAS. According to Maurice Toupane, a researcher in the Dakar office of the Institute for Security Studies, any solution to the crisis should involve ECOWAS. He points to the dissonance between the regional body, the AU and the United Nations (UN) during the coup d'état in April 2012, when the army grabbed power and arrested former prime minister Carlos Gomez Junior and interim president Raimundo Perreira. At the time the AU favoured a forceful stance and suspended the country from the continental institution. ECOWAS, however, decided not to suspend Guinea-Bissau but to put in place a transitional government. This transitional government was financially supported by ECOWAS. 'ECOWAS has played a key role in the transition towards elections after the coup d'état,' says Toupane.

ECOWAS has played a key role in the transition towards elections after the coup d'état

The regional organisation not only supported the transition but also provided financial backing for Guinea-Bissau's elections on 13 April 2014. Nigeria was one of the main financiers and also gave technical support. In addition, ECOWAS sent a 600-strong force to ensure peace during the transition and to oversee the much-needed security sector reform of Guinea-Bissau's bloated military force. For decades, the army played a major role in power politics in the country and has been accused of masterminding

PSC Chairperson

H.E Rachid Benlounes

Ambassador of Algeria to Ethiopia, the AU and the UNECA

Current members of the PSC

Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

much of the drug trafficking there. Guinea-Bissau is notorious for being the drug trafficking hub of West Africa.

ECOWAS also made sure that the Angolan troops present in the country – brought there by former president Malam Bacai Sanhá in March 2011, allegedly to reform the army and to support Gomez Junior – returned home. ECOWAS members Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal all objected to the Angolan presence in the country, which they saw as an attempt to build influence in West Africa.

ECOWAS sent former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo to the crisis-prone country

The political strife that started in August last year, when Vaz decided to sack his prime minister, was a blow to these reform efforts. Vaz then named a new prime minister, Baciro Djá, who was rejected by the Supreme Court because he was not, as the constitution requires, chosen by the majority party in Parliament, the PAIGC. Another prime minister, Carlos Correia, is now in place, but there is still a stalemate between Vaz, who, with the return of 15 MPs who support him, is weakened within the PAIGC, and the prime minister and other powerful members of the PAIGC – the party that brought Guinea-Bissau to independence.

To try to fix the problem, ECOWAS sent former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo to the crisis-prone country. Obasanjo proposed a revision of the constitution to deal with problems arising from the fact that the prime minister seems to have more power than the president. However, Toupane says this is not enough. 'The solution to this crisis has to be much more comprehensive. The crisis is much more complicated.'

At this stage, international actors such as the AU and the UN can put diplomatic pressure on the various actors to find a political solution to the stalemate. The carrot that could make them come to the party is the over 1 billion euros in financial assistance that was pledged during a donors conference in March 2015. This money has not been forthcoming due to the current crisis.

In its communiqué following a meeting on Guinea-Bissau on 9 March, the PSC 'expressed its concern at the risks that this crisis can have on the still fragile political and security situation, as well as on the efforts towards economic and social recovery of the country'. The PSC welcomes the efforts made by ECOWAS through its current chairperson Macky Sall and Obasanjo.

The carrot that could make them come to the party is the over 1 billion euros in financial assistance

'[The] council urged the political actors, as well as all the political and military authorities of Guinea-Bissau, to exercise utmost restraint and a high sense of responsibility, with a view to finding, through dialogue and consultation, the best solutions to their political differences,' states the communiqué.

Last month's visit to the country by the PSC, from 18–20 March, follows an earlier visit, from 3–6 March, of the UN Security Council. In a briefing following the visit, the delegation said: 'Council members had recognized the threats posed by organized crime, drug trafficking and extremist groups [in Guinea-Bissau] and had left the country very concerned about the situation.'

18–20 March

THE PSC FIELD MISSION
TO GUINEA-BISSAU



On the Agenda

The AU opts for a military response to al-Shabaab

Despite a general improvement in the political situation, the security context in Somalia is characterised by a proliferation of attacks by al-Shabaab. On 31 March 2016, the PSC discussed the situation in Somalia and the many issues facing its most important peacekeeping operation, the African Mission for Somalia (AMISOM).

Al-Shabaab relies more on asymmetric attacks

Having lost ground in most urban centres, the terrorist group al-Shabaab now mainly operates in the southern and central parts of Somalia. Since the beginning of the year, the group has launched a string of attacks and offensives. On 15 January al-Shabaab briefly overran AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA) in the port town of El Adde. Seven days later it killed 17 people in an attack on a popular beach hotel in Mogadishu; in early February, the group briefly reoccupied the centre of Marka before AMISOM and the SNA retook it. Al-Shabaab's increasing reliance on asymmetric tactics paradoxically results from the loss of its strongholds and its refusal to engage the AMISOM forces.

Chergui called for the reorganisation of the mission in order to make it more robust and mobile, and for operations to be driven by adequate intelligence

During the PSC summit in Addis Ababa on 29 January, on the eve of the 27th AU summit, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta proposed a five-point plan to enable AMISOM to tackle the new challenges posed by al-Shabaab through:

- Reviewing AMISOM's mandate to match al-Shabaab's mode of warfare
- Ensuring that AMISOM fully deploys troops in their respective areas of jurisdiction, especially in the Gedo region, and reviewing sector allocation
- Soliciting support from the United Nations (UN) and international partners in providing necessary force multipliers to AMISOM for better operational capabilities
- Providing predictable, adequate and sustainable funding for AMISOM through the UN assessed contributions, as the European Union (EU) is reducing its funding of the mission
- Providing resources to ensure sustainable living conditions in the liberated areas in order to accelerate the return of refugees to Somalia

17

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED
BY AL-SHABAAB IN FEBRUARY
AT A BEACH IN MOGADISHU

Adapting AMISOM to the evolution of the security context

Småil Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, reiterated this new approach during his speech at the high-level meeting of the international partners of Somalia in Istanbul on 23 February 2016. He called for the reorganisation of the

mission in order to make it more robust and mobile, and for operations to be driven by adequate intelligence; improved delivery across operational sectors through the reorganisation of the force headquarters; and the enhancement of operational coordination with SNA partners.

A few days later, on 28 February, the recommendations were adopted at the gathering of the heads of state of AMISOM's troop-contributing countries (TCCs) in Djibouti. The main resolutions of this summit were:

- A call for the effective and accountable command of all military units and equipment of the mission under the leadership of the special representative of the AU Commission chairperson and the head of AMISOM
- The need for better coordination of operations and logistics between AMISOM, the SNA and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS)
- A call for enhanced support to AMISOM, especially in order to improve its mobility through the deployment of helicopters
- The need for effective stabilisation efforts in liberated areas through the improvement of local governance by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) with the support of the international community

On 29 February the PSC specifically endorsed the call for an effective AMISOM command. This measure addresses what many observers consider to be the main flaw of AMISOM. The largest AU-led operation appears to be a collection of national contingents reporting to their capitals instead of to the force commander or the AU special representative. The implementation of this provision is thus very challenging. Past experiences show the unwillingness of Kenyan or Ethiopian forces on the ground to submit to AU command. This situation makes it difficult for the mission leadership to ensure the effective management and utilisation of the troops. The Djibouti Declaration is therefore a landmark decision because it is the first time that such a commitment is made at the level of heads of state. The expected outcome of this new direction is to guarantee greater coordination between contingents under the authority of the force commander, at least during future operations against al-Shabaab.

Past experiences show the unwillingness of Kenyan or Ethiopian forces on the ground to submit to AU command

However, there is a contradiction between the call for an effective AU command over national contingents and the method chosen to request it. The process leading to the PSC decision of 29 February was dominated by the TCCs. Clearly, the fear is that domestic concerns will still take precedence over the ultimate goal of the Somali mission.

Troop contributors favour military approach over increased police presence

Another crucial provision of the Djibouti Declaration was 'the imminent draw-down of AMISOM military strength to allow for an increase in AMISOM policing activities, based on the current security assessment in Somalia'. This provision was not explicitly endorsed by the PSC communiqué.

400
personnel

AMISOM'S POLICE COMPONENT

This gradual drawdown was also one of the requirements identified by a joint AU–UN assessment mission for a hypothetical rehatting.

Currently, the AMISOM police component has approximately 400 personnel, less than 2% of the total strength of the mission. Its mandate consists of training and mentoring the burgeoning Somali Police Force (SPF). The added value of an increased police presence would consist of the consolidation of the rule of law in recovered territories and better engagement with communities through proximity. Moreover, this shift would be the starting point for setting up a proper judiciary system. In the current situation, the SPF is barely present outside Mogadishu. The focus on expanding the police's presence in the new regional administrations is challenged by the recent escalation of attacks by al-Shabaab.

The emphasis on military action led by neighbouring countries could fuel the nationalist narrative of al-Shabaab about the supposed illegitimacy of the FGS

The Djibouti Declaration confirms many assessments by the AU and UN on the need to stabilise the areas recovered from al-Shabaab. The most recent report by the UN secretary general also stressed ‘the need to maintain the pressure on al-Shabaab under a comprehensive approach [which includes]: creating space for inclusive politics; and pursuing economic recovery, reducing youth unemployment and enhancing education’.

The AU’s ability to reach these goals seems limited, especially as it would mostly be based on the use of military force. The lack of trust between the Somali population and AMISOM forces is a recurrent issue, and a purely military approach will not address this.

The emphasis on military action led by neighbouring countries could fuel the nationalist narrative of al-Shabaab about the supposed illegitimacy of the FGS, protected by foreign forces. The intensification of action without the consolidation of the rule of law and the effective establishment of local government units in recovered territories could paradoxically result in less legitimacy for the government.

Financial support for AMISOM on the PSC’s agenda

PSC meetings on Somalia are likely to focus on the funding challenges of the new approach. The last meeting was preceded by consultations between the Peace and Security Department and UN regarding the gap created by the reduction of EU assistance and the deployment of helicopters. At the Djibouti meeting, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda pledged to send helicopters to improve the mobility of the mission. The AU and the UN are yet to reach an agreement on the financial compensation and the modalities of use in the framework of AMISOM.

Both of these issues are linked to the specific nature of AMISOM, which is not a traditional peacekeeping force. Therefore, the challenge of the PSC in Somalia is two-fold: adopt a comprehensive effective approach to defeat al-Shabaab while consolidating state and peacebuilding in recovered areas; and get adequate financial support not only from non-African partners but also from African member states.

Situation Analysis

Tense elections in Chad and the Republic of Congo are a challenge for the PSC



Two important elections are taking place in Central Africa – both of them in countries that are members of the PSC. The outcome of the elections in the Republic of Congo on 20 March 2016 – which was won by incumbent President Denis Sassou Nguesso – is widely contested. On 10 April, President Idriss Déby of Chad is also expected to win another term, after 26 years in power. In this context of the sometimes-violent contestation of elections, the PSC should reflect on creating binding electoral requirements for AU member states.

Never during their long tenure in power have the incumbent presidents of the Republic of Congo and Chad faced such opposition; not only from political contenders but also from a large section of society. As a result, polls in these oil-rich countries represent a challenge for the PSC and the African Governance Architecture.

Both countries are an illustration of the concept of ‘low intensity democracies’, meaning that apparently democratic institutions and practices serve to legitimate and perpetuate largely undemocratic rule. It is essential to know how the PSC and the AU in general can address these situations and fulfil their mandate to promote democratic values on the continent.

Tense elections in the Republic of Congo

In October 2015, Sassou Nguesso organised a referendum to remove the presidential term and age limits from the constitution in order to allow him to stand for re-election. The change also included a reduction of the duration of the presidential mandate from seven to five years. The modification of the constitution was officially approved by 92% of the electorate, with 72.44% of registered voters participating in the referendum. Opposition leaders contested these figures, stating that the turnout did not exceed 10%.

Following the promulgation of the new constitution, the government decided to convene early elections in March instead of July. Meanwhile, the new electoral legislation was adopted in January. The main provisions were the adoption of a single ballot and the replacement of the existing election governing body, the National Commission for the Organisation of Elections (*Commission nationale d'organisation des elections*, or CONEL) with a new national independent electoral commission (*Commission nationale électorale indépendante*, or CENI), supposedly with more autonomy.

This electoral timetable was deemed to be unrealistic by the opposition and many observers. Commenting on the new electoral law, the *Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme* stated in February that ‘the conditions for a credible election [were] not met. With less than two months before the first round of presidential elections ... the creation of a new electoral commission is not yet finalised. The process of revision of electoral lists continues over the entire territory (it is difficult to know when the electoral roll will be available and what the deadline for any claims

60%

SASSOU NGUESSO'S SCORE IN
THE FIRST ROUND OF ELECTIONS

are after publication of the first list), the voting cards are not yet edited, the implementing decree fixing the characteristics of a single ballot has not yet been enacted.'

Sassou Nguesso faced eight contenders in the first round of the presidential poll. The main ones were:

- Pascal Tsaty Mabiala, for the Pan African Union for Social Democracy (*Union Panafricaine pour la Democratie Sociale*, or UPASD)
- Guy Parfait Kolelas, a former minister and son of former Brazzaville mayor Bernard Kolelas
- General Jean Michel Mokoko, previously the army chief of staff and special envoy of the AU Commission (AUC) chairperson in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Sassou Nguesso had a clear advantage over his opponents, with his party – the Congolese Labour Party (*Parti Congolais du Travail*, or PCT) – being present in every part of the country. At the same time, the opposition appeared divided along ethnic lines.

According to the results announced on 24 March, Sassou Nguesso won the elections in the first round with 60% of the votes. His closest rival, Kolelas, got only 15%. The opposition strongly rejected the results and has called for public protests against the government.

In Chad, civil unrest against Déby

In Chad, Déby (65), who has been in power since 1992, runs for a fifth term after having suppressed the constitutional term limit in 2005. He pledged to reinstate term limits if he is re-elected.

The electoral campaign started on 20 March amid social and political tensions. Over the last year, various sections of the populace have gone on strike to protest against the rising costs of basic commodities, fuel shortages and unpaid salaries. Teachers, students, university professors, health and social workers, lawyers and civil servants protested in various parts of countries. This civil unrest was brutally repressed by security forces.

Civil society organisations and opposition parties have also accused the president of using the threat of Boko Haram – which has launched several attacks in Chad – as a pretext to reduce the political space.

In the last few months several new civil society umbrella organisations have been formed. These include *Trop, c'est trop* (Enough is enough), *Ca suffit* (It's enough) and *Iyina* ('We are tired', in local Arabic).

These organisations launched a lockdown (*villes mortes*) on 24 February in the main towns of the country. Then there was the operation *Sifflet citoyen* (Citizen whistle) on 10 March, which demanded a change of head of state. In reaction, the

government forbade any street demonstrations that were not linked to the upcoming elections. Civil society organisations planned another peaceful march on 29 March, but four of their leaders were subsequently arrested.

On 10 April, Déby will face 14 opponents, including:

Saleh Kebzabo (68), the leader of the opposition and a third-time candidate after boycotting the polls in 2006 and 2011

Laoukein Kourayo Medard (56), the mayor of Moundou, the second biggest town in Chad

Djimet Clement Bagaou (38), a former soldier and founder of *Trop c'est trop*

Two former prime ministers – Joseph Djimragnar Dadnadji and Nouredine Delwa Kassire Koumakoye – are also running.

The elections in Chad are governed by the Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), whose independence from the government is not sufficiently defined. The body is composed of 17 members of the majority, 17 members of the opposition and six representatives of civil society. However, the secretariat of the CENI is appointed by the Permanent Bureau for Elections (*Bureau Permanent des Elections*, or BPE), which is attached to the Ministry of Territorial Administration. The status of the BPE leads many observers to question the independence of the CENI.

Similar dynamics in the Republic of Congo and Chad

Chad and the Republic of Congo display similar political dynamics. Both incumbents are ageing presidents who seek to extend their rule. In both cases they claim that stability will lead to greater development. However, the extension of their stay in power merely postpones the simmering competition between the presidential family and other members of the state apparatus, such as the civil service and security forces. In both Chad and the Republic of Congo, the prospects of a dynastic succession are a source of tension inside the ruling circles.

This extended stay in power introduces uncertainty in the political arena and allows the president to remain the referee of the competing factions. This situation illustrates the fragility of systems based mostly on the person of the president instead of institutions. Despite their apparent stability – in both countries changes of power mostly occurred through violent means – the rules of Sassou Nguesso and Déby have failed to establish legal mechanisms for the peaceful transition of power.

The second common dynamic is the fragmentation of the political opposition. There is a recurring lack of a common platform among opposition parties, which disagree on everything but the ousting of the incumbent. The presidential

nature of these regimes has instilled a 'winner takes all' mentality in the manner in which opposition leaders consider the political competition. Most leaders prefer chairing small parties rather than playing second fiddle in a coalition or uniting behind a single candidate, even if they do not stand a chance in elections. Moreover, there is a striking parallel between the stability in the ruling party and the lack of renewal among opposition leaders. In Chad, Déby's main opponent previously stood in the presidential polls of 1996 and 2001. In the Republic of Congo, most of Sassou Nguesso's opponents previously served in his administration.

The apathy of the opposition has forced civil society organisations to take the lead. In Chad various collectives have had more impact on the political situation than traditional political parties. The pre-electoral period looks rather like a contest between the government and civil society, which has initiated major political initiatives against Déby.

This situation is risky, as the grievances that these organisations are raising on behalf of the citizens that they claim to represent are not put on the table by the politicians taking part in the elections. This disconnect highlights the gap between society and politicians – a long-term challenge in both countries.

The third dynamic is the role played by oil in shaping the political and social structure. In 2013, oil accounted for 70% of Chadian fiscal revenues. In the Republic of Congo the figure was 73%. This situation results in the state – meaning the presidency – playing a central role in society. It gives the incumbent president a competitive financial advantage over his political contenders and allows him to buy social peace. The drop in oil prices has now affected the ability of the president to reward those loyal to him and to ensure peace through distributing the profits from oil exports.

PSC's approach to elections remains crisis oriented and insufficiently proactive

In the face of these contested electoral processes, room for manoeuvre is limited, for structural and strategic reasons. From a structural point of view, one of the objectives of the PSC is 'to promote and encourage democratic practices, good governance, and the rule of law ... as part of efforts for preventing conflicts'. However, its protocol is not explicit about the means to promote and encourage democratic practices. While the PSC was briefed twice over the last two months about upcoming elections, it also never issued a binding communiqué after these meetings.

The AU's framework document on elections – the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance – does not provide for instruments of monitoring and implementation by signatory states. The Republic of Congo has signed the charter

while Chad has ratified it. Therefore, the PSC does not have the relevant instruments to address the situation in these low-intensity democracies.

The strategic reason is that both the Congolese and Chadian presidents are considered leaders in the subregion. Both states are members of the incoming PSC; Chad was re-elected while the Republic of Congo is a new member. Moreover, both leaders are involved in the management of regional crises. Sassou Nguesso was the appointed mediator in the CAR on behalf of the Economic Community of Central African States, while Chad was militarily involved in Mali and is currently very active in the fight against Boko Haram.

In addition, the fact that Déby is the AU chairperson for 2016 makes it highly unlikely that either the AUC or the PSC will raise concerns about perceived flaws in his governance. As long as tensions do not degenerate into an open crisis, the situation is not likely to be addressed by the PSC or the AU.

This situation illustrates the fragility of systems based on the person of the president instead of institutions

The PSC and the AUC chairperson never addressed the political social tensions in Chad or the repression by the security forces in a communiqué or a press release. The reaction of the AUC chairperson to the Congolese elections also illustrated this peripheral approach. While an AU delegation of observers was sent to the country, the fact that the government cut off all telecommunications during the elections affected their ability to operate.

There are rumours that the deployment of 12 AU election observers came about as a result of a request by the Congolese government rather than the wish for a genuine assessment of the credibility of the elections by the AU.

The AUC chairperson's reaction to the post-electoral tensions did not address this core issue. Instead she called for restraint and the reopening of telecommunication channels after the Congolese government had announced the early results. This indicates that the AU seems to address the consequences of a dysfunctional electoral process rather than the causes.

The AU should consider the following policy options:

The PSC could recommend binding electoral reforms after its meeting on this issue, especially where it concerns current members

The AU could create a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the provision of the African Charter for Democracy, Elections and Governance by signatory states



Addis Insight

The PSC in search of credibility and balance in dealing with Burundi

The credibility of the PSC suffered a blow at the last AU summit in Addis Ababa when the heads of state and government at the PSC summit on 29 January rejected the possibility of deploying a preventive force in Burundi without the consent of the government. Among the decisions taken by the PSC summit was the sending of a delegation of heads of state to meet the Burundian stakeholders.

High-level delegation replaces the PSC field mission

On 25 February the long-delayed PSC field mission in Burundi was replaced by the dispatch of the High-Level Delegation of Heads of State and Government, led by South African President Jacob Zuma and composed of Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania; Macky Sall of Senegal; Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon; and Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia.

The long-delayed PSC field mission in Burundi was replaced by the High-Level Delegation

The mandate of this delegation was, according to an AU press release, 'to consult with the Government, as well as with other Burundian actors, on the inclusive dialogue and the deployment of the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU), if accepted by the Government of Burundi'.

The cancellation of the PSC field mission created the impression that the PSC was no longer the relevant body to take decisions on the security crisis in Burundi. Therefore, heads of state would be directly involved in any new initiative regarding this crisis. It appears that Burundi was lobbying for the deployment of the delegation of heads of state. Moreover, PSC member states are said to have found it 'illogical' to have a field mission preceding a delegation of heads of state. Therefore, it was decided to cancel the field mission.

Confusion on the primacy between the high-level delegation and the PSC

The high-level delegation called for the following actions in its communiqué:

- Dialogue with all stakeholders without preconditions
- Support for President Yoweri Museveni as the East African Community (EAC) mediator, and a call for him to set a date for the immediate resumption of the inter-Burundian dialogue
- An increase in the number of AU personnel in Burundi to 100 human rights observers and 100 military experts
- The restoration of international aid if the situation improves in order to encourage the government and people of Burundi to remain engaged in the inclusive dialogue

There is a dispute around the first point in the communiqué, which calls for 'dialogue without preconditions'. The Burundian government insists that it will only talk to those political parties and opposition groups that are committed to a peaceful outcome, which in its view excludes the main opposition coalition, the Council for the Observance of the Constitution, Human Rights and the Arusha Peace Agreement (CNARED).

There is a dispute around the first point in the communiqué, which calls for dialogue without preconditions

After the departure of the heads of state, the Burundian government issued its own communiqué reasserting its openness to dialogue with 'peaceful stakeholders' in line with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2248. The Burundian government's position was strengthened by the fact that the declaration read by Zuma in Bujumbura referred to 'an inclusive dialogue between important stakeholders' – leaving room for interpretation. The Burundian foreign minister subsequently asserted that the government was only bound by the declaration read by Zuma. He stated on the government's Twitter account that the 'AU Commission [which] is the Secretariat does not change the decisions of Heads of State and Government'.

PSC reaffirms its primacy

The PSC communiqué following its meeting on 9 March 2016 ended the speculation regarding the pre-eminence of the statement read by Zuma and the press release of the AU Commission. The council endorsed 'the conclusions of the visit of the AU High Level dialogue as contained in the Communiqué issued at the end of mission'.

Moreover, the council attempted to reaffirm its primacy and its role in the Burundian crisis. It stressed 'its determination to fully play its role and take all necessary measures for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Burundi, in conformity with its mandate, as stipulated in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU'. The reference to the protocol is a subtle reminder to the Burundian government that all options remain on the table – including the deployment of an African mission. This stance is in line with the AU statement that the envisaged deployment was 'premature', while its relevance was not questioned.

Towards EAC Plus?

The high-level delegation called for active AU support to the mediator (Museveni) appointed by the EAC. However, the lack of results of the mediation efforts led by the Ugandan president

certainly played a role in the appointment by the EAC of former Tanzanian president Benjamin Mkapa as facilitator. Two factors explain the creation of this new position in the mediation team. First, it is an acknowledgement of the fact that Museveni was not fully involved in the mediation due to the recent elections in Uganda. Therefore the division of labour between the mediator and the facilitator is described as such: the facilitator will be in charge of the day-to-day management of the talks but will report to the mediator. The appointment of Mkapa illustrates the growing role that Tanzania intends to play in Burundi. (President John Magufuli was re-elected as EAC chair for another year.)

These changes inside the mediation illustrate the divisions within the region on the Burundian crisis. The call by the high-level delegation for 'active support to the facilitator' can be read as a sign of the AU's willingness to play a greater role in the negotiations in order to mitigate the effects of the divide among the EAC member states. Almost a month after the high-level delegation's visit to Burundi on 25 and 26 February, a date has still not been set for this inter-Burundian dialogue.

The search for a balancing act

One of the main outcomes of the high-level delegation's visit was the agreement by the Burundian government that the number of human rights observers and military experts would be increased to 100 each. The impression created by the communiqué is that the Burundian government agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding defining the modalities of action of these personnel. This can be described as a victory for the AU's efforts in Burundi.

The human rights observers and military experts will monitor the border with Burundi's northern neighbour

However, in response to the concerns raised by Burundi about Rwandan support for armed opposition parties, these human rights observers and military experts will monitor the border with its northern neighbour, which is what the Burundian government has been calling for.

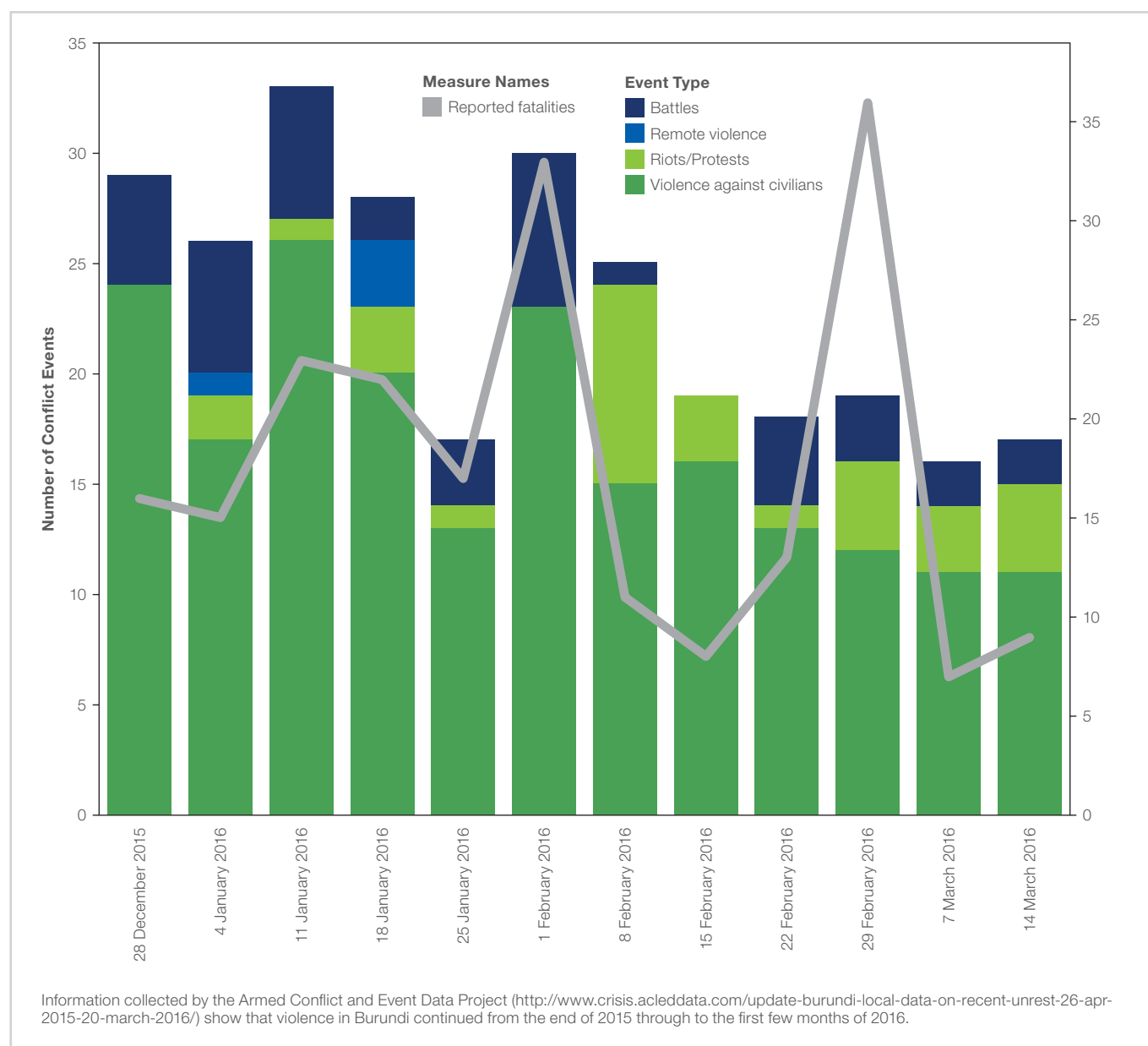
The heads of state also called for the resumption of development assistance to Burundi if the situation was to improve. These provisions could be considered as concessions to the Burundian government and could fuel the perception of an unbalanced approach detrimental to the opposition.

In Bujumbura, the high-level delegation also refused to address the legitimacy of Pierre Nkurunziza's third term in office and did not mention the hypothetical deployment of MAPROBU.

Two concessions were made to the opposition: the call for an inclusive dialogue without preconditions (stated in the AU communiqué on the visit) and the decision to meet stakeholders who were outside the country. However, it remains to be seen whether these decisions will really be implemented in light of the continuous rejection by the Burundian government of an inclusive dialogue without preconditions.

The cautious approach by the heads of state and the PSC seems to support the government and does not provide enough incentives to dissuade some parties from resorting to violence, which would be the worst-case scenario for Burundi.

Violence in Burundi from 28 December 2015 - 14 March 2016



PSC Interview

Disputed elections top the list of the AU's early warning for 2016



The African Union (AU) has made an effort to prevent conflict through early warning, but this has turned out to be a formidable task. The *PSC Report* spoke to Ambassador Frederic Ngoga Gateretse, Head of the Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Division in the AU Peace and Security Department.

There are various crises that erupt in Africa despite early signs of tensions. Is early warning effective at the level of the AU?

We have come a long way in the operationalisation of the Continental Early Warning System [CEWS]. Today I can gladly say that it is fully operational, although challenges remain, such as human resources constraints and the necessary information and communications technology [ICT] infrastructure to enhance data collection efforts and exchange information more efficiently with our Regional Economic Communities [RECs]. We have also made considerable progress in strengthening coordination and collaboration with the early warning systems of the RECs. The issue is to more efficiently link early warning to early response. We are also making efforts in this regard through the horizon scanning that we provide to the PSC, the decision-making body on peace and security matters.

What are the challenges in coordinating with regional mechanisms?

I would not call it challenges but rather the need to enhance the already existing coordination mechanism. We get most of our information from our RECs and we have been working hand in glove on many crises. As a matter of fact, our next biannual meeting with our RECs will take place in the coming month in Addis Ababa. The objective will be to look at potential crises. It is extremely important to have a common and shared understanding of what is happening in order to develop a common strategy. Our commissioner, Smaïl Chergui, has stressed on numerous occasions the concept of 'jointness'. It is essential because the AU alone cannot address the challenges we face on the continent. So we are compelled to forge strong strategic partnerships – a priority in our conflict prevention effort.

Last year, a structural prevention of conflict framework was adopted. Where are we in implementing this document?

This framework was adopted by the PSC because there is an acknowledgement that conflict prevention must tackle structural issues. We need to act earlier rather than dealing with situations that are already in crisis form. The tools exist and now we are reaching out to member states and encouraging them to take advantage of these. The tools will help us to build the in-house capacities of our member states to have a conversation about their structural vulnerabilities and consider mitigation strategies. So this technical assistance is available for our member states.

Aren't you concerned that member states are not ready to have such a conversation about their vulnerabilities?

The Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment is a voluntary process. I think member states are committed to preventing conflicts and they will do everything humanly possible to avoid any crises. Some 30 or so countries are already having this conversation through the APRM [African Peer Review Mechanism] and our Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework [CSPF] will complement this.

Elections continue to be a major cause of crises. What do you do to prevent it?

As an issue, elections are within the purview of the Department of Political Affairs [DPA]. Elections are an opportunity to consolidate democracy and to renew ideas. With many elections planned for 2016, we expect that the majority of the elections will remain largely peaceful, but with the possibility that some might experience turmoil and violence. From past experience, disputes over the composition and membership of election management bodies; complaints about the lack of adequate consultations on impending election timelines; debates around issues of succession and term limits; as well as prevailing security situations have been some of the issues that have led to heightened tensions and violence in some member states. But if you look at the majority of elections on the continent, they are peaceful and credible.

As far as conflict prevention is concerned, we work with our colleagues from the DPA who have the lead on elections. The Panel of the Wise, which is in our division, has on numerous occasions participated in pre-electoral political missions, etc.

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But we also see it is a moment of vulnerability for our member states that have structural issues that have not been addressed. That is one of the reasons why we have developed the CSPF – to help member states identify and address their vulnerabilities.

There was a PSC open session on climate change and peace and security. Do you see climate change as a cause of conflict and instability on the continent?

The continent is facing some consequences related to climate change, such as environmental degradation, desertification, floods, drought and famine. The climate change caused by El Niño in Eastern and Southern Africa poses the worst humanitarian crisis in more than two decades and could escalate into complex humanitarian emergencies in situations of armed conflict. The prevailing drought has already impacted on hydroelectric power generation and the resultant energy crisis in Southern Africa. The AU on numerous occasions has underlined that stresses induced by climate change may increase the risk of violent conflict and unrest on the continent. So the link between climate change and security is real.

How do you address this link in the Early Warning division?

One of the priorities is to work with departments that deal with issues related to climate change, for example the Department of Agriculture and Rural Economy with RECs, to identify early potential trigger of conflicts. Whether it is water scarcity or the displacement of population caused by climate change.

In the efforts to launch a conflict prevention policy within the AU, what are the interdepartmental efforts?

Conflict prevention is multidimensional. Therefore, you need to work with other departments that deal with governance issues, economics issues, social issues. Because we understand that, we have created an Interdepartmental Task Force on Conflict Prevention in order to have a holistic approach to deal with the root causes of instability.

How does this task force work?

The task force is co-chaired by the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace and Security. We hold several meetings. It is working well; we have identified priorities and areas of intervention.

We have many elections this year and we must work to ensure credible, transparent electoral processes

What are the main threats to stability for the year 2016?

The list is not exhaustive but let me touch on a few. First, disputed elections. As I said earlier, elections are an opportunity to consolidate democracy and renew ideas, but it is also a moment of vulnerability. We have many elections this year; we must work to ensure credible, transparent electoral processes. The second one is current crises, which risk an escalation especially as you approach key milestones like peace agreements or the implementation of different accords. We are also observing a trend where countries in post-conflict situations are now facing the risk of relapse.

Then we have the threat of terrorism, where you have various groups affiliated to al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State competing in the race to the bottom by stepping up attacks in different parts of the continent. This was demonstrated by the recent attacks in Libya, Tunisia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Kenya, etc. There are also new threats known as 'hybrid threats', such as cyber security. Then there is also concern over bioterrorist threats, with two dozen conventional biological agents, including anthrax, and an unknown number of genetically engineered organisms that terrorists or other criminals could acquire and unleash on an unsuspecting public.

The other issue that may affect peace and security is the bleak economic outlook. International financial institutions have issued forecasts on the impact of global volatility on Africa's economic growth in 2016, pointing to an increasingly challenging macro-economic environment in the short term and a negative impact on investment, commodities, agricultural production, employment and economic growth.

Lastly, we have climate change, which can lead to the displacement of people and trigger tensions at the national and regional scales. All of these challenges require us to work together at the subregional, continental and global level.



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The Institute for Security Studies is an African organisation that aims to enhance human security on the continent. It does independent and authoritative research, provides expert policy analysis and advice, and delivers practical training and technical assistance.

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About us

The *Peace and Security Council (PSC) Report* is an initiative of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) through its office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was established in 2009 with the principal aim of supporting and complementing the work of the African Union (AU) and its Peace and Security Council through the provision of regular, independent and research-based information on and analysis of the PSC and its activities. The *PSC Report* offers the wider constituency of the AU, as well as African civil society organisations, the media and the international diplomatic community a reliable means of following and tracking the work of the PSC.

The *PSC Report* accomplishes these objectives through the publication of regular reports on issues that are either on the PSC's agenda or that deserve its attention. Through its webpage dedicated exclusively to the ISS' work on the PSC, the *PSC Report* also offers regular updates on current and emerging agenda items of the PSC.

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