



Peace & Security Council Report

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Kagame's last push to ensure AU reforms

On 17 and 18 November African leaders were called to Addis Ababa to make important decisions on the future of the AU, its relationship with regional and international bodies, and how to strengthen peace and security responses on the continent. This was Rwandan President Paul Kagame's last big push to cement his legacy as AU chairperson before he hands over to Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in January 2019.

Decisions at the 11th extraordinary summit of AU heads of state centred on institutional reforms, negotiations on the post-Cotonou agreement with the European Union, transformation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency into the AU Development Agency, and strengthening the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

Kagame's African success story in taking Rwanda from the abyss of a genocide to a prosperous nation has bolstered his stature and that of his country. Kagame's latest international achievement was securing consensus for the election of Rwanda's now-former foreign affairs minister Louise Mushikiwabo, to the position of secretary-general of the International Organisation of the Francophonie.

Heads of state approved institutional changes around new recruitment and management procedures within the AU Commission

The Rwandan 'miracle' has however not come without criticism about the country's poor record on human rights, civil liberties and political freedom. Many also feel there wasn't enough consultation with member states during initial efforts to get the AU reforms adopted.

Kagame was entrusted with reforming the AU in 2016. Two years later, heads of state approved institutional changes around new recruitment and management procedures within the AU Commission. The other key reform – relating to the relationship between the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) – is less clear.

Avoiding duplication

Commission chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, who has been working closely with Kagame, said ahead of the summit 'the reform of the AUC [is] in order to eliminate duplication in its structure and portfolios, enhance the selection of the senior leadership, and accelerate administrative and financial changes with a view to improving overall efficiency'.

Current PSC Chairperson

His Excellency Mohamed Idriss Farah, ambassador of Djibouti to Ethiopia and permanent representative to the African Union.

PSC members

Angola, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe

In future, the structure of the AU Commission will change from the existing eight to six commissions. The preliminary allocation of responsibilities have been made, but this can still change ahead of the implementation of the restructuring in 2021. So far, the six commissions will be: Political Affairs, Peace and Security; Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and the Environment; Economic Development, Trade and Industry and Mineral Resources; Education, Science, Technology and Innovation; Infrastructure and Energy; and Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development.

The commission will thus in future be composed of eight (no longer 10) top senior officials – the chair, deputy chair and six commissioners.

The AU Commission could benefit from better coordination between its departments, and so a non-elective position of director-general in charge of operational coordination will be created. The only change in the recruitment process of the commission's senior leadership is that the screening, shortlisting and 'campaigning' will be more competitive, transparent and fair.

Finally, on the proposed self-financing of the AU, leaders at the summit voted to strengthen the sanctions against states that don't pay their contributions. This is accompanied by the commission's revamped budgeting and financial management system approved earlier this year.

While the proposed changes in the AU Commission structure are commendable, decision makers must distinguish between streamlining and downsizing. Many feel that as much as the commission carries some dead weight, it is in reality understaffed.

The chairperson is due to submit a proposal on a detailed commission structure to the AU's Executive Council in July 2019. This must be designed in accordance with the division of labour between the commission, AU specialised agencies and the RECs.

For institutional reform of the AU to occur, the specialised agencies, member states and RECs must rationalise their use of resources and cut down on duplication. This is no small task and remains to be properly tackled.

Changing the management of Africa's affairs

In two years as chairperson of the AU reforms committee and nearly one year as AU chairperson, Kagame is about to succeed in changing the management of the continent's affairs. Following the adoption of some of the reforms this weekend, the AU Commission could become better structured, properly financed and soundly managed.

Specialised agencies such as the AU Development Agency and the APRM could also become more efficient and contribute to an integrated and prosperous Africa. This will depend on if and how the reforms are implemented.

The politics of national sovereignty will present a major obstacle to addressing Africa's pressing governance challenges

Perhaps more significant, in March this year Kagame spearheaded the launch and initial signature process of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, which twelve countries have ratified. Rwanda was also the first country to sign and ratify the Protocol on the Free Movement of People. Kagame also oversaw the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market. Those represent big steps towards African integration.

Nonetheless, the debate on AU reform has gone from imbuing the AU Commission and organs such as the Pan-African Parliament with some decision-making power, to simply reforming, perhaps cosmetically, the structures of African intergovernmental institutions.

The rationale for delegating some power to African institutions is that they should be able to act on the aspirations of African people, beyond the narrow constraints of states that at times turn against their own citizens.

While current reforms could contribute to a more integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, the politics of national sovereignty will still present a major obstacle to addressing Africa's pressing governance challenges.

The PSC's visit to Somalia should include federal states

On 27 November, the PSC plans to visit Somalia to interact with relevant stakeholders. Such a visit could be used to gather information about the situation on the ground, as well as to prevent tensions between the government and federal states from escalating further.

The PSC visit comes at an important time in the overall effort to sustain the progress made in the restoration of peace in Somalia. Despite numerous challenges, the country has seen a great deal of progress since the end of the third transitional arrangement in August 2012, largely through the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its international partners. Testament to this progress are the gains made in the fight against the Islamist group, al-Shabaab, and the consolidation of the country's federal system. However, the country is still fragile and could quickly experience a relapse in those areas where some progress has been registered.

Tension between federal states and the government

Progress is being threatened by tensions between the federal government and the federal states. In early September, the five federal states suspended cooperation with the federal government owing to grievances over resource allocation and power sharing, allegations of political interference in the internal affairs of federal member states and accusations of the government's lacking commitment to rid the country of al-Shabaab. While one of the states, Hirshabelle, later resumed cooperation with the government, the rest have not.

The tensions and underlying grievances are not new and were in fact one of the major issues that bedevilled former president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's government. However, the situation has worsened and now poses a major threat to political stability in the country in a number of ways.

The federal states are the building blocks in the on-going state reconstruction efforts. The real danger therefore lies in the extent to which these tensions stand to erode progress in state construction efforts and threaten to isolate the central government – a move that will reverse the gains made against al-Shabaab.

One of al-Shabaab's strengths is its ability to run alternative parallel structures to that of the federal government in areas under its control. Any indication of political instability in Mogadishu thus affects the government's ability to win the respect of citizens in al-Shabaab-controlled areas and to convince them of the government's relevance. Political stability at various levels of government is also essential for the government and federal structures to focus on the consolidation of political and security gains.

National and regional stakeholders divided

Apart from the broader impact on political stability at the national level, the implications of the tensions for political stability at the regional level have raised concerns in many policy circles. In the run-up to the mid-November 2018 presidential elections in South West State, for example, national and regional stakeholders remain divided because of accusations that two of the candidates had strong political, financial and logistical backing from political actors in the federal government.

In the run-up to the mid-November elections in South West State national and regional stakeholders remain divided

Their participation and the associated apparent mobilisation of support for them by politicians in Mogadishu were perceived to constitute meddling by the federal government in state-level elections and as a conscious attempt by President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo to oust the incumbent regional president, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan.

Members of the regional electoral commission and Adan have subsequently resigned in a move that has raised tensions and will affect the integrity of the electoral process. This has also further weakened prospects for amicable dialogue between Mogadishu and the state.

As has become clear in South West State, local political processes are increasingly becoming a contestation between the federal government, which wants regional leaders loyal to it, and regional stakeholders who are opposed to the current ruling elite in Mogadishu. Compounded by existing clan dynamics, mistrust among leaders and local political dynamics at state level, the tensions between Mogadishu and the states threaten political and security stability in Somalia.

Several elections will be held across the country in the coming years and there is a high probability that the same tensions will affect such elections in other parts of the country as well.

The PSC needs to make the political impasse a major component of its visit

In addition, Somalia also currently grapples with the impact of the Gulf crisis, even as some federal states and the federal government differ over their alignment with actors in the Gulf. Other major issues requiring attention include preparations for the 2020/21 elections, border disputes between Somaliland and Puntland, and on-going discussions about the future of AMISOM and capacitating the Somali National Army to take over from the AU-led force.

Why focus on the political tensions?

Despite these competing issues in the country, the tension between the federal government and the states is currently the single biggest threat to progress in Somalia. Even though the federal government has expressed its unwillingness to accept any external mediation in resolving the tension, it is clear from the history of the crisis that successive governments have lacked the capacity to find an amicable and sustainable solution to this issue. The PSC therefore needs to make the political impasse a major component of its visit.

Playing a role in solving the tension, however, requires extensive consultations in and outside Mogadishu. This is particularly necessary as the central government is itself an actor in the crisis. Interacting only with Mogadishu and not the federal states will raise questions about the neutrality of the AU in attempting to understand and resolve the impasse.

Going beyond Mogadishu or finding a way to meet all the stakeholders involved in the tension, either in Mogadishu or outside, will demonstrate the seriousness of the PSC in its dealings with all stakeholders. Actions that neglect the full involvement of other stakeholders risk creating other challenges.

Over the years, one of the key challenges of AU visits to conflict areas has been a perception among opposition groups that the AU favours host governments. In the case of Somalia, any discussion with Farmajo's government without due regard to concerns raised by federal states

Mid-November
2018

ELECTIONS IN
SOUTH WEST STATE

will create problems. And while the federal states are ready for external mediation, any engagement with them without considering sensitivities in Mogadishu will also worsen the situation. It is therefore important that in this particular visit, attempts are made to engage all actors so as to provide a balanced understanding of the situation.

Need for synergy with special envoys

A month after his appointment as the United Nations' (UN) special envoy to Somalia, Nicholas Haysom has initiated a number of visits to understand and resolve the tensions. In early November he visited several of the regional states, a move that indicates his prioritisation of these tensions in his shuttle diplomacy role in Somalia. Similarly, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) special envoy for Somalia, Mohamed Ali Guyo, also embarked on a mission to Puntland in July during which discussions were held over the Tuqaraq conflict between Somaliland and Puntland.

Visiting missions to specific conflict areas or areas of concern will have to be more frequent

The PSC visit needs to take these efforts into consideration and find synergy in a way that prevents duplication and appropriately maximises the collective commitment of both the AU and the UN to deal with existing challenges to peace in Somalia.

Options for addressing the challenge

This is not the first time the AU is using visiting missions as an avenue for first-hand information gathering. It is, however, important for the AU to find ways of maximising its regular use as an important conflict prevention and management tool. To achieve that, the AU will have to take a number of things into consideration.

First, visiting missions to specific conflict areas or areas of concern will have to be more frequent, particularly in the midst of major threats to progress in situations such as Somalia. This will ensure that the AU's presence and relevance on the ground, as well as the PSC's first-hand information gathering capacity, are enhanced in a way that makes its decision-making easier.

It is also important for the PSC to consider making the visits precede discussions and briefings on particular countries. In cases where this is not possible, attempts should be made to use the visits as an avenue to address issues raised during briefings.

The options available to the PSC in this case are largely in terms of the use of its preventive diplomacy and good offices to, first, de-escalate the rising tensions, reinforce the message on the need for political consensus in making and sustaining progress, and push for a discussion of the relationship between the federal government and regional states in the on-going constitutional review process ahead of the 2020/21 elections.

2020/21

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
IN SOMALIA

Back to the future in Madagascar

Whoever becomes president in Madagascar at the end of this year is likely to have an axe to grind. Following elections on 7 November, both frontrunners, who will be facing off in a second round next month, are former presidents. Both were excluded from participating in the 2013 elections through intervention by the international community. This was seen by mediators of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a compromise solution following the 2009 coup.

According to the latest figures, after 75% of the votes have been counted, Andry Rajoelina got 38.95% in the 7 November poll. His main rival, Marc Ravalomanana, had a tally of 36.8% and Hery Rajaonarimampianina, who served as president until September this year, secured only 7.7%.

According to the National Independent Electoral Commission, voter turnout was 57%. This is close to the 61% in the first round of presidential elections in 2013. Save any major last-minute surprises, a second round between Rajoelina, who was president from 2009–13, and Ravalomanana, who led the country from 2002–9, will take place on 19 December.

Rajoelina, a former disc jockey, deposed Ravalomanana in a coup in March 2009. Ravalomanana fled to South Africa and fought for years to get himself reinstated as Madagascar's legitimate leader.

Both frontrunners, who will be facing off in a second round next month, are former presidents

SADC and other actors led negotiations to get Ravalomanana back to Madagascar, where he had been condemned for crimes emanating from the 2009 standoff with Rajoelina. A compromise was reached and SADC convinced the Malagasy to have a new election without Rajoelina or Ravalomanana. The option to exclude both main players became known as the 'ni-ni' option: not Rajoelina, not Ravalomanana.

In return for not running, Rajoelina and Ravalomanana would have, in theory, obtained amnesty for everything that happened during their turbulent regime change in 2009. The agreement was however never fully implemented, and many in Madagascar felt the ni-ni option was undemocratic.

Rajaonarimampianina, a relatively unknown finance minister, was elected president in December 2013, supported by Rajoelina. Many expected him to dance to the former DJ's tune, but he was more or less his own man as president, albeit not very successfully. He also didn't get much international support – SADC having moved on to other things.

Two ex-presidents still popular

The results of last week's poll show that Rajoelina and Ravalomanana remain by far the most popular politicians in the country – and if not popular, the ones with the most money to campaign and the strongest campaign networks countrywide. The huge amounts spent by both on their campaigns have shocked many observers, especially given Madagascar's dire poverty.

Rumours abound about foreign governments supporting some of the candidates, but there appears to be no enforceable ceiling on what candidates are allowed to spend during their campaigns in Madagascar.

Does this mean the SADC plan to stabilise politics in Madagascar following years of upheaval was a failure? If the same actors simply step back into the ring and shove aside all others, is the country back to square one?

SADC got involved at a time when there was a stalemate in Madagascar. Former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano led shuttle diplomacy for months to come up with a solution. The African Union (AU), the United Nations, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, France, South Africa and others played a role in the run-up to the 2013 poll.

SADC roadmap includes reconciliation

The fact that elections did take place that year meant Madagascar could fully integrate into the international community through the lifting of AU sanctions in January 2014. A roadmap that included reconciliation between the parties was also part of the SADC plan. Although a reconciliation commission is in place, little progress has been made.

Earlier this year Rajaonarimampianina wanted to adjust the electoral laws in a bid to get Ravalomanana and Rajoelina excluded from last week's poll. The same actors, this time with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa as SADC chairperson and AU special envoy Ramtane Lamamra, intervened to stabilise the situation and pave the way for inclusive elections.

The AU, the UN, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, France, South Africa and others played a role in the run-up to the 2013 poll

The 7 November elections were said to be largely free and fair, despite complaints about the voters roll and the lack of transparency concerning campaign financing. The SADC election observer mission led by Zambia's foreign minister Joseph Malanji said the elections were peaceful, orderly and in line with the country's laws. European Union observers said the few 'minor irregularities' wouldn't influence the outcome of the poll.

Already though, there are rumblings of discontent and accusations of election rigging, especially from the Ravalomanana camp, as there often is during such a close race. Madagascar's politics is fickle and dominated by a few relatively young politicians who are bound to be on the scene for some time.

Much at stake

For Rajoelina and Ravalomanana, much is at stake. Rajoelina has to improve his reputation of being merely a young DJ who stole the presidency from his predecessor. Some say he is bitter about the fact that Rajaonarimampianina didn't toe the line after receiving Rajoelina's backing for the presidency.

Ravalomanana on the other hand feels he was cheated out of another term at the helm of Madagascar – first through the coup and then through the decision not to let him run in 2013. He is also a wealthy businessman who wants to recover what he lost while in exile and under house arrest after his rather mysterious return to the country in 2014.

The role of SADC in the 2009-13 transition in Madagascar was clearly controversial. Yet the good offices of the region and the continent might be needed again to make sure peace prevails once the results of the second round are announced, regardless of who wins.

57%

VOTER TURNOUT
IN MADAGASCAR

Scorecard: PSC meets often, but few new initiatives are launched

Between August and October this year, the PSC held a large number of meetings. These included discussions on Libya, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Darfur and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Very few new initiatives, however, were launched. In some cases, such as Burundi, the PSC again called for action by the region – in this instance, the East African Community (EAC) – and in others, such as the CAR, it expressed support for the AU initiative in the country. The PSC also called on international actors not to ignore the various efforts by the AU special representatives and the AU high-level committee on Libya.

In several cases the PSC tasked the AU Commission (AUC) with further investigating the various conflicts and develop future strategies.

The PSC also discussed broad thematic issues, including child marriage, Africa's security priorities, democracy, Africa Amnesty month, the African Standby Force (ASF) and the state of peace and security on the continent.

Emphasising the AU's 'pivotal role' in Libya

On 17 October the PSC met to discuss the 'prevailing volatile situation' in Libya and received a briefing from the special representative of the AU chairperson in the country. It condemned the ongoing fighting in Libya and expressed grave concern at what it calls 'external interferences' in the country. The PSC would like to see recognition of the important role the AU plays in Libya – a conflict situation that has been the focus of efforts by the United Nations (UN) and other actors since 2011.

The PSC commended SADC for trying to stabilise the political situation in Lesotho and for sending troops – a successful deployment of the SADC standby brigade

Mobilising resources for Lesotho

The PSC discussed the situation in Lesotho on 10 October, following its field mission to the country in August this year. It commended the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for trying to stabilise the political situation in the country and for sending troops. The PSC sees this as an example of a successful deployment of the SADC standby brigade as part of the ASF and encouraged other regions to take note. The PSC also thanked the AUC for its efforts to get funding for the SADC force and offered additional AU help to SADC if need be.

August 2018

PSC FIELD MISSION
TO LESOTHO

What future for the ASF and ACIRC?

The ASF was on the PSC agenda a few weeks prior to the Lesotho discussion, during a meeting on 20 September. The PSC asked the AUC to submit a plan on the harmonisation of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) and the ASF, including steps to be taken by the AU and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs) to coordinate ad-hoc coalitions. The council also urged the AUC to urgently organise a meeting of the PSC Military Staff Committee to propose a roadmap and timelines on how to overcome the challenges facing the harmonisation of ACIRC and the ASF.

Eliminating the LRA

On the same day the PSC held its 795th meeting on the initiative to eliminate the LRA. Despite the withdrawal of the Ugandan contingent and the United States Special Forces, the AU decided to maintain the regional cooperation initiative against the LRA (RCI-LRA) to avoid leaving a security vacuum in the region. It also asked the AUC to develop an exit strategy for the RCI-LRA with realistic timelines and concrete alternatives. In addition, the AUC was asked to consult the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on establishing the modalities of alternative security arrangements, within the framework of the ASF, to be led by ECCAS with a view to successfully concluding the fight against the LRA. The AUC was tasked with developing a regional strategy for the stabilisation of LRA-affected areas, basing on lessons learnt from the regional strategy for the stabilisation of Boko Haram-affected areas in the Lake Chad Basin region.

The PSC decided to reduce the number of human rights observers and military experts in Burundi

Fewer observers for Burundi

Burundi was the topic of the PSC's meeting on 19 September. The PSC reiterated its support for the mediation efforts led by the EAC. It asked the AUC to provide support to Burundi to convene an all-inclusive dialogue on strengthening democracy and respecting human rights. The PSC decided to reduce the number of human rights observers and military experts, without indicating the level of reduction. It also asked the AUC to continue engaging Burundi to sign the memorandum of understanding for the operation of the human rights observers and military experts. In addition, it called on the European Union to lift the sanctions imposed on Burundi, with a view to facilitating socio-economic recovery in the country.

Supporting the AU initiative in the CAR

The 19 September meeting of the PSC also included a separate meeting on the situation in the CAR. The PSC noted that the facilitation panel of the African initiative had handed a list of 14 armed groups' grievances and demands to

Burundi

UNDER EU SANCTIONS

the president of the CAR, Faustin-Archange Touadera. The PSC asked the AUC chairperson to intensify AU support for the implementation of the African initiative, including budgetary support to convene a national dialogue.

Africa Amnesty Month

On 4 September the PSC commemorated Africa Amnesty Month for the collection of illegal weapons. The PSC asked the AUC to finalise technical and operational guidelines on how national and regional actors could observe the month – one of the main innovations led by the PSC in its efforts to ‘Silence the guns by 2020’. This included a request to the AUC to finalise the production of a compendium of African experiences and good practices in implementing voluntary disarmament programmes.

Is the AU Charter on Democracy good enough?

On 22 August the PSC examined the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The PSC asked the AUC to develop guidelines for amending national constitutions that will be universally applicable to all member states. Parallel to a similar decision in 2014, the PSC asked the AUC to collect the constitutions of all AU member states for referencing and studying, to identify inconsistencies with good governance and standard constitutionalism.

Migration observatory centres envisaged

Africa’s security priorities were the theme of the PSC’s 16 August meeting. The PSC raised concerns about various security threats, including the illegal exploitation of resources, corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows. It also expressed concern over migration, human trafficking, terrorism and organised criminal networks on the continent.

The PSC asked the AUC to expedite the establishment of migration observatory centres in all five geographical regions of Africa. It also asked the AUC to finalise the comprehensive study on the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture and to submit the report of the study for consideration by the council to the AU Extra-Ordinary Summit scheduled for 17 and 18 November 2018.

The AUC is also requested to finalise evaluation and monitoring mechanisms that are part of the AU Roadmap to Silence the Guns by 2020. This includes a request that the AUC organise consultation processes on issues relating to the division of labour between the AU and subregional organisations.

Ending child marriage

The PSC held a meeting on 14 August on ending child marriage in Africa. The 2018 UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) statistics show that ‘sub-Saharan Africa currently has the highest levels of child marriage globally, having overtaken South Asia, and that about 4 out of every 10 girls in Africa are married before the age of 18’. The PSC asked the AUC to expedite the development of a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism to gauge member states’ progress in implementing existing legal frameworks on ending child marriage.

4 out of 10

GIRLS MARRIED
YOUNGER THAN 18

PSC Interview: South Sudan's September deal 'just a first step'

A new peace agreement was signed in South Sudan on 12 September 2018 in an attempt to bring an end to the five-year war in the country. Andrews Atta-Asamoah, the Institute for Security Studies expert on the Horn of Africa, spoke to the *PSC Report* about the current peace process and assessed the way forward.

Is the peace deal that was signed in September 2018 holding?

There have been a number of significant developments in South Sudan since the signing of the revised peace agreement. The most notable have been the return of key opposition leaders, including opposition leader Riek Machar, to Juba for the 31 October celebration of peace; the government's release of some prisoners; ongoing efforts to constitute relevant institutions in the agreement such as the National Pre-Transition Committee, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Monitoring and Verification Mechanisms; and, most importantly, the notable decline in hostilities and violence across the country.

Signing agreements is usually not a big deal in South Sudan; sustaining it is the real work. In that sense, the September signing is just the very first step

It is, however, difficult to attribute the reduction in hostilities entirely to the peace agreement. The inability of the opposition to match the government's war capacity, which has been the case for a while, has contributed significantly to the reduction in the number of cases of fighting and clashes across the country. Since the signing of the agreement, one can argue that violence has decreased even further. But a lot of work remains to be done and it is overall too early for anybody to confidently conclude that the agreement is holding.

I would say the greatest contribution of the agreement, so far, has been in its provision of a framework through which all the parties seem to be gradually coming to terms with the reality of the urgency of the need for peace in their country. Signing agreements is usually not a big deal in South Sudan; sustaining it is the real work. In that sense, the September signing is just the very first step.

Can refugees start thinking of returning home?

My answer is simple: no. Some progress towards peace has been made but the country is far away from where it ought to be before refugees and

18 September

SIGNING OF THE REVISED
PEACE AGREEMENT

internally displaced people can be returned. There is need to commend the little progress made, but there is greater need for caution in rushing people whose villages and livelihoods have been totally obliterated by years of fighting into the situation of uncertainty. The extent of destruction in parts of the country is extreme. Restoring villages, livelihoods and confidence to return will take time.

Have the main opposition leaders now returned to Juba permanently?

As stated earlier, a number of opposition leaders, including Machar, returned to Juba for the peace celebration, which took place on 31 October 2018. Since then, Machar has returned to Khartoum. Other opposition leaders, including Gabriel Changson, Joseph Bakasoro, Bafeng Munyiel, Deng Alor and some others, are still in Juba. Lam Akol is in Khartoum. Currently, sources close to the opposition indicate that the actual final return of key leaders to South Sudan will be predicated on the provisions of the revised agreement, but in cases of big peace events like the 31 October celebration, we might see some of the leaders jetting to Juba, on a temporary basis.

What are the most urgent issues that need to be resolved in order for the peace deal to be implemented and to make sure the country doesn't slide back into full-scale warfare?

Not all opposition actors are happy with the current agreement. Their biggest complaint, for a while now, has been that their positions were not fully represented. Also that the revised agreement does not address the underlying causes of the conflict. There are also important matters outside of the revised agreement that need to inform shuttle diplomacy efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and various regional, continental and international special envoys.

The most urgent matter for sustaining the agreement is confidence building among the parties particularly between major opposition groups and government

The most urgent matter for sustaining the agreement is confidence building among the parties, particularly between the major opposition groups and the government. Without trust between President Salva Kiir and Machar, this agreement too will fail. The Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), David Shearer, said in his speech at the peace celebration in Juba that 'the key ingredient needed at every step is trust'. I completely agree with him.

Other important issues include the need to cultivate and sustain commitment to full implementation. For instance, even though it is encouraging that some prisoners have been released, many more remain behind bars. The government also needs to remove impediments to humanitarian access by

31 October
PEACE CELEBRATED
IN JUBA

the National Security Service so as to carry out its promise of easing human suffering in the country. Going forward, it is crucial to anchor overall gains on a solid programme for national reconciliation once the guns have finally been silenced.

Who do we have to thank for this latest peace deal? The neighbours? IGAD?

It's been a collective effort. The last round of talks in Khartoum was led by Sudan and Uganda. Prior to that the regional body, IGAD, pushed the High-Level Revitalisation Forum, which fed into the Khartoum talks. The Troika (the United States, Norway and the United Kingdom) and the broader international community have all played important roles in putting pressure on the regional actors and the warring parties to work toward peace. The South Sudan peace process has revealed a lot about institutional and diplomatic weakness at the regional, continental and international levels. I do hope the lessons learned can inform internal processes for reforming responses to crises on the continent.

There's a general sense that the region and the AU have favoured the government extensively

What should be the priorities for the African Union (AU) and particularly the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in dealing with South Sudan going forward?

The PSC should support the regional efforts to implement the revised peace agreement. There's a general sense that the region and the AU have favoured the government extensively. At this point, the PSC should be ready to apply the needed pressure to get all signatories to respect the peace agreement. Beyond remaining seized of the matter, the AU's special envoy should play an active role in supporting ongoing regional and international efforts in the country. The PSC should be ready to apply sanctions where necessary. The PSC should also spearhead and speed up ongoing processes for accountability and justice, because that is the only way the pervasive extent of impunity can be dealt with in South Sudan and beyond.

What happens if this agreement fails?

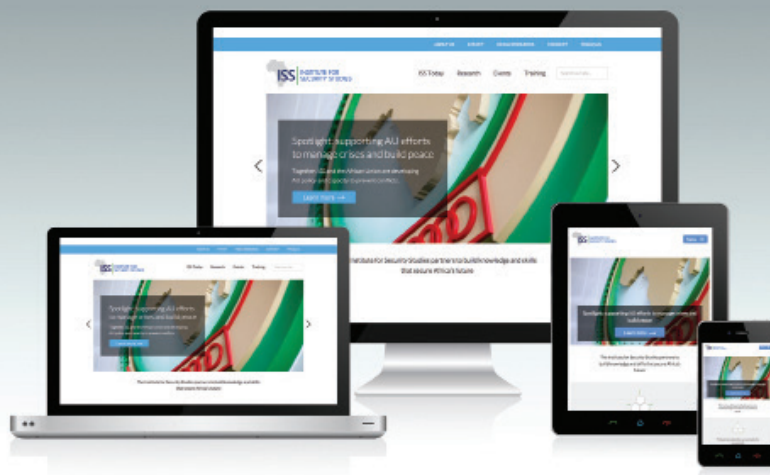
I have tried not to imagine that; even though that is highly possible. My reason for not imagining that is because I know how much the people of South Sudan have suffered due to this war. Currently, I am not aware of any Plan B on any policy shelf, either at the regional or at the continental level. The current Plan A is the Plan B. So I think it must work. If it doesn't work, then there will be the need for the international community to consider the idea of instituting a technocratic government, which various opposition groups have been proposing for a while now. If a technocratic government becomes the option, the first requirement of such a move should be to exclude the ruling class.

Khartoum

HOSTED THE
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