



Peace & Security Council Report

Exorcising the demons of coups d'état

Africa-Europe peace and security partnership at a crossroads

Will the Russia-Ukraine situation derail agreements between Africa and its partners?

Is the AU mission in Somalia changing in name only?

Could joint AU-UN mediation break Sudan's stalemate?

Exorcising the demons of coups d'état

The wave of coups that has engulfed several West African countries in the past two years prompted the African Union (AU) to convene a high-level forum to tackle the issue. The meeting took place in Accra, Ghana, from 15 to 17 March 2022. Coups took place in Mali (August 2020 and May 2021), Guinea (September 2021) and Burkina Faso (January 2022), and there was an attempt to overthrow President Umaro Sissoco Embaló in Guinea-Bissau in February 2022.

As coups had occurred in four countries, it was feared that there could be a contagion effect leading them to proliferate to even more countries in the region and on the continent.

The coup formula is too well known: Military takeover of the presidential palace and the national broadcaster, then the arrest or assassination of the president of the republic. This is followed by televised or radio announcements by military officers of the suspension of the constitution and the establishment of a military committee to run the country.

The political instability induced by changes in power through coups seriously harms the democratic ideal to which most Africans aspire. Thus, the Accra meeting to explore the causes of the coups, identified gaps in frameworks addressing the challenge and proposed measures to contain the situation. The conclusions of the meeting are to be presented to the AU heads of state and government at an extraordinary summit in Malabo in May 2022.

Governance an issue

According to several delegates to the Accra forum, interruption of the constitutional order by the military can be blamed on the structure and mode of governance of African states. States' inability to provide public goods, particularly security, education and health and to offer prospects have caused the contestation they face from large sections of their population.

Challenges in sustaining state relevance ultimately creates a deficit of legitimacy. The increasing number of constitutional amendments to extend presidential terms or strengthen executive powers often goes hand in hand with the organisation of dubious elections. These factors together point to governance weaknesses and political manipulation that exploit vulnerable populations. In a similar vein and to varying degrees, the army continues to be prominent in the state structure of many African countries. Some soldiers are in power because they have traded their military uniform for civilian clothing to become head of state. In other cases, the army constitutes a guarantee of stability and maintenance in power of autocratic regimes and those described as 'civilianised' (being civilian only in name).

Clearly, electoral 'democracy' and the often-fabricated legality of many African regimes cannot replace a much more substantive democracy. The state must

Current PSC Chairperson

HE Mafa Sejanamane, Lesotho's permanent representative to the African Union.

PSC members

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

also maintain its own legitimacy through its services to citizens. Consequently, while unconstitutional changes of government, particularly seizure of power by the military, must be condemned, it has to be done where constitutionalism has substance and is not a facade.

As noted in Accra, African normative instruments have become less and less effective in preventing coups. In other words, even if they remain relevant, the AU Constitutive Act, the Lomé Declaration, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, in particular, show their limits today.

The Chadian case was mentioned in Accra, but a question remained unasked. This was whether the AU Peace and Security Council decision not to label it a coup fed the ambitions of those plotting to remove Condé in Guinea and Kaboré in Burkina Faso.

What precedent has Chad now set on unconstitutional changes of government? Several meeting participants also raised the treatment reserved for putschists. If they comply with the AU and regional economic communities requirements of a 'classic' transition, delegates stated, they do not incur sanctions or repercussions likely to discourage future orchestration of putsches.

Accra discussions, however, overlooked the question of how to foster a culture to turn constitutionalism into a strong conviction beyond implementation of and respect for constitutional norms. This culture would transcend procedure to become an unshakeable belief in the supremacy of the constitution as the sacrosanct and inviolable foundation of the nation.

Solving the problem

Various solutions were proposed, the immediate priority being that the AU strengthen existing normative frameworks. These instruments must, first and foremost, be properly implemented and domesticated. Countries that haven't done so must ratify the key AU frameworks.

It was also pointed out that existing instruments should be updated and made more specific. They should consider popular protests against incumbent regimes and how to deal with the legalistic contortions that allow constitutional amendments to strengthen the powers of the executive or to extend presidential terms. Similarly, appeals were made to include in the revamped instruments stronger and targeted sanctions against coup plotters.

All of this would be really effective only if the continent's deficits of good governance are curbed. This could be achieved partly by establishing state structures and institutions that are much more responsive to the contemporary challenges of African societies. Also necessary is a strong response to the perennial question of sovereignty, which is likely to hinder AU and regional organisation moves to improve governance of member states.

The May 2022 AU extraordinary summit on unconstitutional changes of government will consider recommendations made in Accra. Heads of state must decide whether to push for ratification and implementation of existing frameworks or whether to amend these to cover concerns raised. Either option will require strong political commitment, with amendments of instruments taking longer and having an impact on the pace of ratification.

May 2022

SUMMIT ON
UNCONSTITUTIONAL
CHANGES OF
GOVERNMENT

Africa-Europe peace and security partnership at a crossroads

The African Union (AU)-European Union (EU) summit from 17 to 18 February 2022 failed to highlight Africa's concern over Europe's foreign and security policy shift regarding the financing of peace and security. The change was announced in 2021 as part of the EU's new defence package. It remains to be seen how deeply the European Peace Facility (EPF), which replaces the African Peace Facility (APF) under this new defence package, will affect continuation of financing for African-led peace support missions. Some African states also fear the change may signal increasing European militarism and interventionism.

Although the facility promises to build the capacity of EU's partners and provide predictable funding, it may undermine provisions of a 2018 AU and EU memorandum of understanding (MoU). It may also threaten multilateral engagement between the two continents, and collective African decision-making on peace and security. The AU, however, not only missed the opportunity presented by the summit to discuss this with the EU, but failed to recognise and deliberate internally the EPF and its implications.

In the absence of an African strategy for engaging Europe, the AU, particularly the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), should discuss the implications of the EPF for Africa. Although AU-EU technical expert meetings are ongoing, AU policy organs should understand and formulate a position on the implications of the EU's potential supply of lethal weapons to African partners.

The AU missed the opportunity presented by the summit to discuss the European Peace Facility with the European Union

They should also assess its support to military missions that are neither led nor endorsed by the AU under EPF provisions. Furthermore, the AU has to deliberate how it will compensate for the financial shortfalls expected from the change in Europe's financing strategy under the EPF. Operationalising the AU Peace Fund and gaining access to United Nations assessed contributions are, therefore, African priorities.

European insecurities

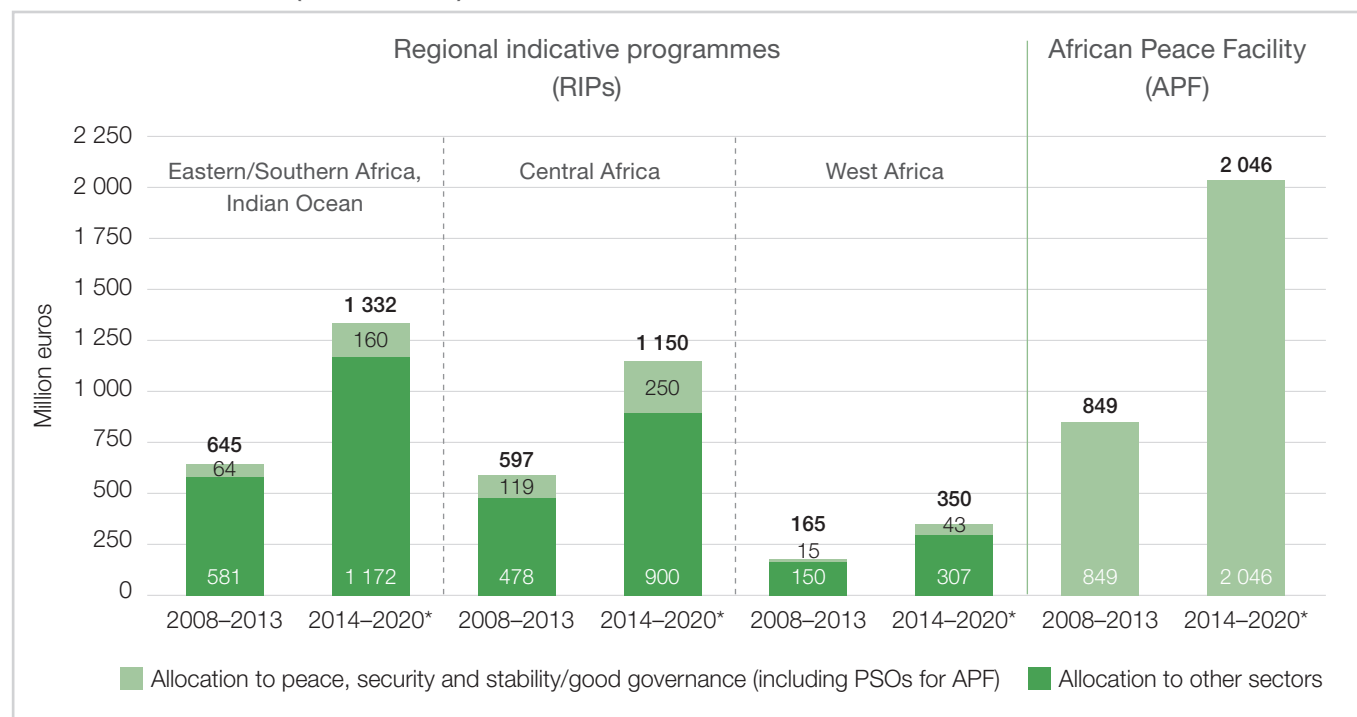
Africa's peace and stability are priorities for Europe. European countries are worried not only about the ramifications of terrorism and violent extremism, but about undocumented African migrants entering their continent. It is not surprising then that the EU has been the biggest donor for African-led peace

17–18

February

AU-EU SUMMIT
IN BRUSSELS

Chart 1: Amounts allocated to peace and security under regional indicative programmes (RIPs) and the APF, 2008 to 2020* (million euros)



Source: European Court of Auditors, based on information provided by the European Commission

support operations (PSOs) within the framework of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

EU military and defence support has been through direct contributions of EU member states to the APF. The facility, founded in 2004 as a dedicated EU fund to support APSA, has contributed €2.68 billion mostly to finance 16 African-led PSOs deployed in 19 countries.

The Africa-Europe partnership on peace, security and governance was enshrined in the AU and EU MoU. This agreement makes the AU a primary stakeholder and decision-maker in planning, authorising, coordinating and disbursing EU funds to African-led PSOs.

Redefining the relationship

The EU consolidated its financing mechanism for military missions and operations under the EPF in 2021. This effectively ended the terms of the APF and redefined the AU and EU partnership. The AU is no longer the channel for EU financing of military missions and operations in Africa. The EU may finance operations to complement direct military intervention by an EU member state, such as the deployment of an EU military taskforce for France's Operation Barkhane in Mali.

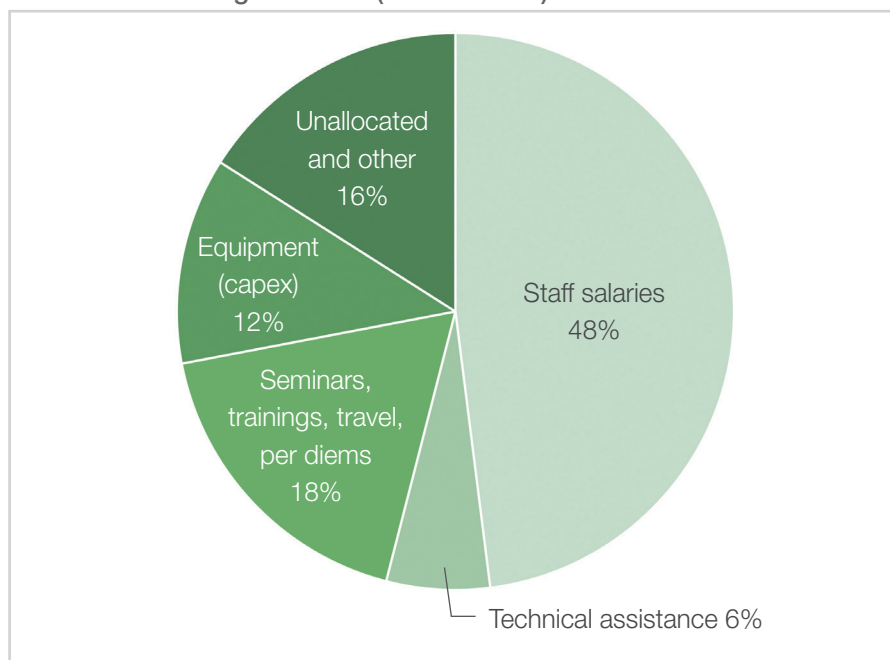
It is also evident that the move away from the APF and its intention to engage directly with other stakeholders in Africa will significantly reduce EU funding to the AU. This will affect particularly finance for AU-led peace support missions.

The EU consolidated its financing mechanism for military missions and operations under the EPF in 2021

The termination of the APF has other major consequences. To date, the AU-EU partnership had been a donor-recipient relationship. The two bodies and regional communities, however, decided how EU's financing would be used. Under the EPF, the EU, in addition to being a financier of military operations, will also provide strategic direction and political backing to such missions. This, in the long-term, may hamper continental leadership of peace operations as part of Africa's quest for peace and stability.

According to the EU, a driver of this change was a 2018 European Court of Auditors report. This concluded the

Chart 2: EU funding for APSA (2014 to 2016)



Source: European Court of Auditors, based on information provided by the European Commission

AU had not taken sufficient ownership of financing APSA, forcing the EU to cover operational costs rather than capacity building of APSA components as per objectives. The report also cited as challenges to EU continued financial support of APSA the lack of coherence of AU financing instruments, paucity of information on results, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation.

The EU's 2021 defence package includes the European Defence Fund, which allocated around €8 billion to enhance Europe's defence industrial base and increase its military autonomy from the United States. The change in Europe's global stance indicates its ambition to not only influence but directly intervene in peace and security outcomes, including in Africa. This has raised concerns.

Africa's concerns

A number of AU member states have expressed concern about the EPF as representing Europe's foreign and security policy shift from political engagement to a militarised and interventionist approach in defending Europe's interests. They believe although AU use of the APF may have experienced challenges, the EPF's primary role is to exert direct decision-making power in how Europe's money is used in Africa and elsewhere.

This change in foreign engagement is worrying for these countries. Military intervention will make the EU a direct actor in African conflicts, which could bring more foreign forces to the continent, with or without African states' consent. Bilateral and/or regional processes may not align with continental priorities nor be controlled by the AU. With the EPF promising to provide partners with lethal weapons, experts fear a proliferation of arms with serious ramifications for the continent's communities.

€8 billion

THE EUROPEAN
DEFENCE FUND

This concern is even more pronounced as the EPF does not provide a comprehensive list of EU partners. Although the AU, regional economic communities and AU member states are included as partners, the definition is vague and open to interpretation. African diplomats are, therefore, concerned that the list may include armed opposition groups and other non-state actors when they are fighting with governments regarded to be against EU interests. A similar scenario unfolded in Libya in 2011.

For the first time, the EU is supplying lethal weapons to a third country, Ukraine, under the provisions of the EPF. EU's military support to the government of Ukraine in its war with Russia has raised concerns over whether the model could be replicated elsewhere in the world, including in Africa. Some experts, thus, fear that EU's new strategy may therefore not work in the total interest of continental push for peace and security and may even have serious negative consequences.

Dearth of discussion

The EPF's provisions were never discussed with the AU. From the European perspective this is because the EPF, unlike the APF, is no longer a dedicated fund to promote peace and stability in Africa. Instead, it is an EU global strategy to safeguard European security and defence interests. Africa is, thus, just one of the many 'beneficiaries' of the facility.

The AU PSC did not broach the issue before the February 2022 AU-EU summit, despite having almost a year to do so and to formulate a response. The reason, the AU maintained, was that the EU had not formally informed it of the establishment of the EPF or the termination of the APF.

The AU attended the AU-EU summit without a common position on how the EU should address its concerns

Support for the EPF among certain West African and Sahelian countries has divided Africa's position on the EPF. These countries believe the facility helps eliminate bureaucratic delays and overhead costs incurred by the AU's financial oversight of EU funding to ad hoc military missions in Africa. They also argue that the EPF will acquire for African military missions more financing, modern military technology, capacity building for military personnel and military infrastructure development.

Thus, the AU attended the AU-EU summit without a common position on how the EU should address its concerns. If the relationship between the partner unions is skewed, Africa's lack of consultation, preparation and consensus is mostly to blame.

While Europe agrees on how to deal with African peace and security concerns, African countries do not share an understanding of their priorities and concerns in partnering with the EU. With the EU's change in foreign policy approach, Africa has to revisit its priorities and plan its response to Europe's change in strategy.

Ukraine

RECEIVED EPF FUNDS
AND WEAPONS

Will the Russia-Ukraine situation derail agreements between Africa and its partners?

At the sixth African Union (AU)-European Union (EU) summit in Brussels on 16 and 17 February, the two organisations agreed to a ‘joint vision’. They committed to equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, ensuring Africa’s economic recovery, combating illicit financial flows, mitigating climate change and cooperation on matters of peace and security. On 24 February, the war in Ukraine broke out.

The summit, the first in five years, included promises of an investment of €150 billion for Africa against the background of fierce global competition for economic influence on the continent. On 11 March, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and Political Affairs, Peace and Security Commissioner Bankole Adeoye met with United States (US) secretary of state Antony Blinken. The US vowed to work closely with the AU, signalling growing cooperation and recognition of the role of the AU as Africa’s voice in the world.

AU-EU relations and the ‘joint vision’ may not be directly influenced by the Ukraine crisis, but the agreements could be affected by the global economic impact.

Almost half AU member states abstained or did not vote in the 2 March United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Ukraine, which could influence relations between individual countries and Europe. The resolution ‘deplores in the strongest terms’ Russian aggression against Ukraine and calls on Russia to ‘immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.’

The AU will have to ensure implementation of partners’ commitments. This will also hold for summits such as the November 2021 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Dakar.

Extreme concern

On 24 February, Moussa Faki Mahamat and AU Chairperson Macky Sall expressed ‘extreme concern over the very serious and dangerous situation created in Ukraine’. The two leaders called on the Russian Federation and any other regional or international actor to ‘imperatively respect international law, and the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine’.

Following the meeting with Blinken, US ambassador to the AU Jessica Lapenn told *PSC Report* that the

US welcomed the statement by Mahamat and Sall. It also lauded Kenya, Ghana and Gabon – AU members serving as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council – for supporting the General Assembly resolution condemning the Russian invasion.

Lapenn said despite the circumstances, the meeting between Blinken and Mahamat focused on Africa. Climate, economic growth and development, health and peace and security were discussed. US support was renewed through a new memorandum of cooperation for the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which has been at the forefront of the continent’s fight against Covid-19.

Continental tensions

The 2 March vote revealed an Africa deeply divided. Seventeen AU member states abstained, eight didn’t vote and Eritrea voted against. On 24 March, only 22 African countries supported an alternative resolution by South Africa on humanitarian assistance to Ukraine that didn’t mention Russia. South Africa explained that its draft resolution sought a solution to the humanitarian crisis that would have buy-in from all parties, including Russia.

While relations between the AU and its partners the EU and the US are unlikely to be directly affected, the stance by certain African countries could hamper future diplomatic relations and development assistance. Some EU diplomats on the continent were surprised, even angered, that countries such as South Africa refused to support the 2 March resolution. Abstention was seen as a rejection of efforts to maintain international peace and security. A total of 141 UN member states voted for and only four against.

EU ambassador in South Africa Riina Kionka has been very vocal in her criticism of South Africa’s abstention. ‘We’re puzzled because South Africa sees itself and is

seen by the world as a country championing human rights, international law and the rule of law,' she tweeted.

South Africa countered that the 2 March resolution 'did not foreground the call for meaningful engagement'. President Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that South Africa is committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts based on its own history having 'attained democracy through a negotiated settlement'. Abstaining, he added, does not mean that it doesn't uphold human rights nor is unconcerned about the impact of the conflict on civilians.

A European diplomat based in Pretoria told PSC Report that EU relations with South Africa are unlikely to be affected since the organisation doesn't 'punish' countries that way. However, others have said that aid and development assistance to countries or organisations that openly support Russia could be impacted.

Member states divided

In the debate around the AU's role representing the continent, the differences between the AU and EU are important to note. The AU is an intergovernmental organisation that cannot 'forge a common position' at this stage in its development as a regional body. The EU has supranational status and can speak on behalf of the bloc.

The AU statement by Mahamat and Sall condemned the attack on Ukraine because they were sticking to AU values and norms on sovereignty. Sall, as AU chairperson, expressed serious concern about the situation, but then his country, Senegal, abstained on 2 March, which was arguably a much sharper criticism of Russia.

Senegal's position also shows that countries chose to abstain for national interest.

AU 2022 theme

The war in Ukraine threatens to severely affect food security in Africa, as some countries rely heavily on Russian and Ukrainian imports of wheat, according to African Development Bank's Akinwumi Adesina. East Africa, for example, depends on it for one-third of its supplies, with Egypt and Sudan particularly heavily affected by the crisis. Other major consumers of the commodity are Nigeria, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia.

Ironically, the 2022 AU theme, launched at its summit in Addis Ababa in February, is 'Building resilience in nutrition on the African continent: Accelerate human capital, social and economic development'. In this complex context, the organisation will struggle to make its voice heard to secure a lasting solution to the crisis.

It will also have to consider carefully whether the implementation of its commitments with the EU will be negatively impacted if continental divisions over the Ukraine invasion persist. It can, meanwhile, focus on ensuring that recent commitments are not completely stymied by the situation.

2 March

THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY VOTES
ON UKRAINE

Is the AU mission in Somalia changing in name only?

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has supported that country's government in the fight against al-Shabaab for the past 15 years. The operation was due to end in December 2021, and agreement has finally been reached on what appears to be simply a name change and extension of the existing mandate.

The AU, United Nations (UN) and Somali government decided that on 1 April, AMISOM will be replaced by the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The new mission will operate until the end of 2024, after which all responsibilities will be handed to the Somali Security Forces. ATMIS' capacity of around 18 000 troops, 1 000 police and 70 civilians mirrors its predecessor, as does much of its mandate.

So has anything changed that can help stabilise Somalia? AMISOM's work started in March 2007, to degrade al-Shabaab and build the capacity of the Somali Security Forces, military and police so that the mission could eventually withdraw in 2021. The exit didn't happen though, as the security threats that necessitated the deployment in the first place, continue.

The UN Security Council is expected to approve the mandate and authorise ATMIS at its 30 March meeting

To determine AMISOM's future, the AU and UN conducted independent assessments last year, and various options were proposed. Agreement was needed on a new mission's mandate, composition, size, strategic and specific objectives and tasks of the military, civilian and police components.

Somalia's government wants ATMIS to focus on implementing the Somalia Transition Plan. The plan was developed in 2018 to transfer security responsibilities from AMISOM to the country's security forces. It was recently revised and will be carried out over the next three years. The AU and UN agreed with this approach. Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, said ATMIS' stabilisation and state-building objectives would fully align with the Somalia Transition Plan.

The AU Peace and Security Council outlined a mandate for the new mission that included degrading al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups, providing security, developing the capacity of the security forces, justice and local authorities, and supporting peace and reconciliation. The UN Security Council is expected to approve the mandate and authorise ATMIS at its 30 March meeting.

But AMISOM's mandate was also aligned with the Somalia Transition Plan, so there's nothing new about ATMIS in that regard.

ATMIS

THE AU TRANSITION
MISSION IN SOMALIA

Omar S Mahmood, Senior Analyst at the International Crisis Group, told the *PSC Report* he believed ATMIS would have only a few slight differences. 'The biggest change is perhaps that the idea of a "transition" is more thoroughly embedded within the rationale of the new mission, which has a four-phased timeline to work with the Somali government to implement the Somalia Transition Plan. Also, a few smaller adjustments are supposed to happen as well, such as re-alignment of AMISOM's sector structure and increased command-and-control authority under the mission's force commander, but these are limited overall.'

In terms of operational changes, ATMIS will differ from AMISOM by developing more mobile and agile forces in each sector of the mission. The job of these quick-reaction forces with enabling capacities will mainly be to rapidly degrade al-Shabaab and other extremist militant groups.

AMISOM's replacement comes at a critical time. Political tensions in the country still threaten the gains made over the years. Divisions among Somalia's elites over the distribution of power and resources are at the centre of all the problems. Two peaceful power transitions occurred in 2012 and 2017, but the third faltered due to disputes over election management.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, in power since 2017, is still in charge after his term expired in February 2021. Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble was tasked with reforming the election process, but progress has been slow. The country's future is unpredictable, with the political impasse sometimes boiling over into armed clashes.

Increasing attacks by al-Shabaab is another major challenge. Many assaults were reported in the past few months, with recent strikes in Mogadishu and Beledweyne resulting in over 53 deaths. Despite actions by AMISOM and the Somali Security Forces, the group still controls large territories in South and Central Somalia, and attacks are increasing.

Al-Shabaab's financial and warfare capacity is also growing. The Hiraal Institute, a Mogadishu-based research group, reports that the group collected about US\$180 million in revenue and spent US\$24 million on weapons in 2021.

ATMIS will also face the same financial woes as AMISOM. The UN provided the mission's logistical support, with the European Union (EU) funding military and police personnel stipends. But the EU reduced its support over recent years, and its intentions for ATMIS aren't yet clear. Tiina Intelmann, head of the EU delegation to Somalia, has said that 'The EU is ready to contribute and assure predictability of funding as long as the configuration plan is realistic, pragmatic and focused.' So it seems that ATMIS won't differ fundamentally from AMISOM in its mandate. It will mostly be a continuation of the current military support which, while essential for the country's security, won't be new.

Since the political stalemate is at the centre of Somalia's social and security problems, solving that should be the priority. If it is to differ from AMISOM, ATMIS' mandate and force reconfiguration should include robust political engagement to support reconciliation among the country's divided political groups. Otherwise, the exercise simply renames the mission – which won't help the country much.

February
2021

PRESIDENT
ABDULLAHI MOHAMED'S
TERM EXPIRED

Could joint AU-UN mediation break Sudan's stalemate?

Mediation in Sudan's broken political transition is yet to bring stability to the country. Attempts by the UN and the AU have failed to restore the transitional civilian-military partnership following the 25 October 2021 coup. Will their recently announced joint efforts yield better results?

The coup effectively ended Sudan's transition and created further dissonance between civilians and the military, pushing both entities into a zero-sum position. When protesters resisted the coup, military crackdowns led to at least 87 civilians being killed and thousands injured.

Since October, several international and regional mediation efforts have sought to break the deadlock. But grassroots movements and political parties have hardened their positions against the military, distributing slogans such as 'No negotiation, No partnership, No compromise.' Civilians and the military have previously resisted mediation, while they forum-shop for intermediaries who can advance their interests.

Coup leaders continue to govern a collapsing economy, liberalising the Sudanese pound and attempting to compensate for foreign aid losses

The critical fault line in negotiations is the intransigence of the parties involved. A pro-democracy faction calls for a civilian-only government, while an old guard made up of military and paramilitary groups refuses to loosen its grip on power.

Coup leaders continue to govern a collapsing economy, liberalising the Sudanese pound and attempting to compensate for foreign aid losses. Rising food and fuel costs are likely to exacerbate ongoing protests. Resolving the impasse between groups with fundamentally different stakes will be difficult.

Both the AU and UN have already attempted mediation. Their special envoys used methods ranging from visits and consultations with different Sudanese stakeholders to condemnation and suspending Sudan from the AU's Peace and Security Council.

As the special representative for Sudan and Head of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), Volker Perthes played a crucial role in briefly restoring the transitional agreement in November 2021. However, it was precisely this institutional push for a return to the status quo that led to the UN's mediation efforts being rejected.

25 October
2021

ANOTHER COUP IN SUDAN

For the pro-democracy faction – made up of resistance committees, the Sudanese Professionals Association and the Forces for Freedom and Change – the UN's pleas to restore an inherently faulty transitional arrangement legitimised the coup. It also overlooked accountability for the military's human rights abuses. And so the UN now has to rebuild its credibility in Khartoum.

Correcting these perceptions of bias depends on UNITAMS's approach to an inclusive intra-Sudanese process that can achieve democracy and peace. A recent UNITAMS report on the outcomes of wide-ranging consultations with more than 800 participants representing state and non-state actors could shift perceptions and ensure the support of diverse stakeholders. The verdict is still out on whether this process would cement and strengthen the UN's role as a credible mediator.

For its part, AU mediation in 2019 was instrumental in setting up the transitional agreement. It defused the crisis and secured the power-sharing accord between civilians and the military. The deal was easier to facilitate among more flexible parties at the time. The AU seems to favour quiet diplomacy and hasn't divulged much about its mediation efforts in Sudan.

The AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye visited Khartoum in mid-January to explore the positions of Sudanese stakeholders. Yet until recently, the AU hadn't publicly announced if and how it would develop a mediation strategy. Whether or not this quiet diplomacy is a tactical choice, the outcomes are yet to deliver favourable conditions for both parties.

African-led mediation would highlight the AU's role in effectively managing conflicts on the continent. It would also incorporate East Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development as the regional peace and security bloc. Aligned to the principle of subsidiarity,

this approach would curate African solutions to solving African problems.

The value of joint AU-UN mediation is that it can build on existing processes and networks since both bodies have established inroads with leading political actors. A common approach would reduce rivalry and contradiction among mediators, as competing agendas often extend the conflict.

To achieve the best transitional outcomes for Sudan, lessons must be learned from previous mediation processes. Reactionary responses and subdued diplomacy have hindered the process thus far, and joint negotiations could be just what the country needs.

The bilateral effort combines the AU's legitimacy with the UN's capacity for resources and mobilisation

The bilateral effort combines the legitimacy of the AU with the UN's capacity to provide resources and mobilise stakeholders. The joint process could leverage UNITAMS's current consultations and strengthen capacity for applying and monitoring potential accords. An enforcement mechanism with oversight from both entities is paramount, given the trust deficit between civilians and the military.

To break the stalemate, the objective should be to set up a new political dispensation in Sudan. A rush to restore a civilian-military partnership will be counterproductive.

Joint mediation needs to create a power balance between civilian leaders and the military on crucial areas such as constitutional arrangements, elections, security sector reform and justice and accountability. Mediators and Sudanese stakeholders must agree on an inclusive roadmap that sets out goals and how to achieve them.

About the PSC Report

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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The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future. Our goal is to enhance human security as a means to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity. Using its networks and influence, the ISS provides timely and credible analysis, practical training and technical assistance to governments and civil society.

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