



Peace & Security Council Report

Special Focus: Malabo summit

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Can the African Union respond effectively to unconstitutional changes of government?

The 16th extraordinary summit of the African Union (AU) on 28 May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, debated the most urgent continental peace and security priorities. Chief among them is unconstitutional changes of government (UCGs) against the backdrop of the sharp rise in military coups in the past two years. Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Chad are grappling to restore full civilian rule following military takeovers.

This indicates that existing continental frameworks and mechanisms on UCGs have failed to deter the overthrow of sitting governments by military juntas. Mali and Sudan also experienced further coups while in political transitions brokered by the Economic Community of West African States and the AU. This highlights the challenges that response mechanisms by both regional and continental bodies face in assisting countries' transition to democratic rule.

Summit discussions on UCGs were the culmination of deliberations on the issue since 2019. In 2022 alone, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) focused three sessions on UCGs, including an AU continental reflection forum from 15 to 17 March in Accra, Ghana.

A successful outcome would mean consensus among member states on how they will adopt and, in some instances, drastically shift their approach to dealing with UCGs. All states agree that UCGs require urgent responses from the AU and regional economic communities (RECs). However, lingering divergence on specific processes and actions may render the outcomes of the summit purely rhetorical, lacking impact on AU policies and actions.

Agenda of the summit

According to the draft summit agenda, Sierra Leone President and Chairperson of African Peer Review Forum Julius Maada Bio led the discussion on UCGs. The official topic is 'Unconstitutional change of government – consolidated actions to strengthen constitutionalism and democracy'.

The summit was expected to deliberate on why the AU, despite relatively robust UCG response mechanisms, coups are on the rise. The summit was expected to endorse a modified version of the Accra Declaration. This was developed during the PSC meeting with member states, civil society organisations, RECs and partners at the Accra forum from 15 to 17 March.

Among the main issues of the declaration are addressing the legitimate concerns of citizens, including the socio-economic and governance factors that lead to UCGs. Also featuring are the manipulation of laws and tampering

Current PSC Chairperson

HE Churchill Ewumbue-Monono,
ambassador to Ethiopia and
permanent representative to the
African Union.

PSC members

Burundi, Cameroon, Republic of
Congo, Djibouti, The Gambia, Ghana,
Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal,
South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia,
Uganda, Zimbabwe

with constitutions by incumbents to modify or eliminate constitutional term limits, and to expand their powers.

The declaration proposes several recommendations for adoption by member states, RECs and the AU in preventing UCGs. These include a guideline on the amendment of constitutions based on AU frameworks, and ensuring that constitutional amendments adhere to 'democratic rights and are based on national consensus'.

It further recommends that the PSC consistently apply AU normative frameworks on UCGs and uphold constitutionalism among member states. It also calls for the revitalisation of the PSC Sub-committee on Sanctions to develop different levels of punitive measures against deviants.

External interference?

Also on the summit agenda was the contentious role of 'internal or external interference' in the overthrow of sitting governments. The ousting of Muammar Gaddafi by NATO forces in 2011 with local armed opposition groups is fresh in many member states' minds. It is viewed as the perfect example of how popular protests are hijacked by internal and external interest groups to effect regime change.

There is similar conviction that recent military coups in Africa have had strong backing from both African and non-African actors. This will, however, be difficult for the AU to prove. With the change in global political dynamics, experts believe that economic pressures coupled with staged popular protests will become the modus operandi for regime change. This is a departure from the assassinations of heads of state and support to armed opposition of the post-independence and the Cold War era.

While there may be truth in this analysis, it is a slippery slope to categorise all protests as such, as it further stifles the right of citizens to protest against injustice.

Adoption of the Accra Declaration

The PSC noted and endorsed the Accra Declaration in April 2022, and submitted it for consideration and adoption during the extraordinary summit. While this indicates that the document is palatable to member states, it was not a guarantee it would be adopted.

The AU's response to military coups has been reactive despite extensive early warning signs, particularly mass protests agitating for change. Protests are often preceded by incumbents' attempts to extend their term or expand their powers through constitutional amendments. To date, the AU has sanctioned only military coups, although the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) calls for sanctions against all forms of UCGs, including constitution tampering.

More than 10 heads of state attending the summit have themselves amended their constitutions to extend their term and/or remove term limits

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ACCRA DECLARATION
ON UNCONSTITUTIONAL
CHANGE OF
GOVERNMENT

entirely. It was highly unlikely then that there would be a strong call to curb constitutional amendments.

More importantly, however, adoption of the Accra declaration does not guarantee implementation, especially as it specifies its provisions will be implemented in consultation with and with approval of the member state concerned. States have never allowed the AU to discuss political and governance issues they consider to be their internal affairs, protected under the AU's principle of sovereignty.

Almost all member states believe constitutional amendments falls within a state's internal affairs. Thus, it will be near impossible for the PSC to discuss popular protests against sitting governments, the manipulation of electoral laws and incumbent constitution tampering to extend term limits.

The February 2022 AU summit proposed a high-level hybrid committee of sitting and former heads of state and government to engage incumbents who try to amend national constitutions 'without national consensus'. If such a committee is formed, its ability to carry out its mandate will depend on the goodwill of incumbents.

States have never allowed the AU to discuss political and governance issues they consider to be their internal affairs

Member states will also continue to diverge on how the AU should respond to military coups following popular uprisings. While some AU diplomats call coups such as those of Sudan in 2019, Mali in 2020 and Guinea in 2021 as 'civilian coups' that should be treated differently from UCGs, others strongly disagree.

Another contended point is whether the AU should treat as UCGs the resignation of incumbents under duress as in Algeria and Zimbabwe in 2019 and 2017. The PSC did not sanction either country at the time. Other issues lacking consensus include whether the transitional term limit of six months following military coups should be amended, and whether AU sanctions against UCGs should be expanded.

How can the AU better respond to UCGs?

AU UCG response depends on the extent to which member states abdicate their sovereignty to allow monitoring of compliance to UCG policies, including the Lome Declaration and ACDEG.

The AU's ability to monitor compliance should also be enhanced, including expanding the capabilities of the African Governance Architecture and the AU Legal Counsel. This can help empower non-political units within the AU to monitor and provide early warning advice to the PSC for swift response to UCGs.

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AFRICAN PRESIDENTS
CHANGED THEIR
CONSTITUTIONS

Terrorism and violent extremism expand despite AU efforts

At their meeting in Malabo on 28 May 2022, African Union heads of state deliberated on terrorism and violent extremism, in addition to unconstitutional changes of government (UCGs) and continental humanitarian responses.

The extraordinary summit of the AU Assembly was set against the backdrop of Africa's emergence as the global epicentre of terrorism according to the Global Terrorism Index 2022. The number of terrorist groups in Africa expanded with the return of foreign fighters and as states' security apparatus is weakened by internal political instability and conflict.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 48% of global deaths from terrorism. Attacks have spread beyond historical hotspots such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa to southern Africa and coastal regions of West Africa.

This is despite the AU and its member states having adopted extensive policy frameworks on terrorism and violent extremism, such as the 1999 Algiers Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the related 2004 Protocol, and having deployed a number of counterterrorism-related peace-support missions in various parts of the continent.

This includes the Multinational Joint Task Force, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, Southern Africa Development Community Mission in Mozambique, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia and the Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army.

This summit marked the second time in nearly eight years since the Peace and Security Council (PSC) met on this issue after it held its first summit-level meeting on the topic on 2 September 2014. African leaders had another opportunity in Malabo to review the current approach to counterterrorism and also discuss the growing nexus among conflict, UCGs and transnational organised crime. It also allowed them to interrogate why the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism seems to be growing despite concerted continental effort to counter it.

Summit agenda items

The draft agenda of the summit included a report on terrorism and UCGs to be presented by Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security Bankole Adeoye.

The outcome of a meeting of heads of intelligence and security services in Africa were also expected to be shared. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, AU counterterrorism champion, and Cameroonian President Paul Biya, Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for May 2022, addressed heads of state ahead of the general closed discussions.

The summit's major decisions were expected to include the proposal to establish the African Standby Force (ASF) counterterrorism unit. Decisions were also set to be made on financing of African-led counter-terrorism operations and coordination between regional economic communities (RECs) and the AU in deploying missions.

The anti-terrorism unit is meant to address the shortcomings of traditional peacekeeping and enforcement missions in responding to terrorist threats in Africa.

The summit was a stage to explore why terrorism seems to grow despite concerted effort to curb it

Another AU focus has been securing predictable and sustainable financing for missions led by the AU and authorised by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In addition to support from partners and from member states' assessed contributions, the Peace Fund is also now operational. At May 2022, it had \$295 million, \$2 million of which had been allocated to the Crisis Reserve Facility. The newly established special counterterrorism fund is another financial resource.

Securing UNSC assessed contributions for PSO's are, however, challenging. First, counterterrorism-related PSOs raise issues about the UN principle of impartiality, which has governed the deployment of peacekeeping missions around the world. As a result, the UNSC has been reluctant to engage in countering terror operations.

The second challenge is African ad-hoc PSOs are in theory guided by the AU's Doctrine on Peace Support Operations (PSOs), and thus comply with International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Full compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law has however been problematic and a major concern for the UN. Currently, means are limited to ensure compliance and respond to violations and misconduct in these missions.

Partners have also highlighted the AU's weak financial management instruments, which makes it even more difficult to convince UNSC members to allow it access to assessed contributions. The AU has tried incrementally to resolve some of these challenges. It has set up a comparatively robust financial management system in the past year and made strides to reach a common African position on financing peace and security activities.

African states either have poorly established intelligence agencies or are too suspicious of each other to share intelligence of terrorist activities

During its meeting in May 2022, the AU's Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security made further progress. Notable was a request that member states and RECs enact PSO policies that guarantee IHL and IHRL compliance and ensure that the ASF concept aligns with the PSO doctrine.

The committee proposed a draft memorandum of understanding between the AU and RECs on the ASF. This may dispel confusion about who mandates and deploys the ASF, particularly for counterterrorism operations. Such confusion surrounded the Southern African Development Community's deployment in Mozambique.

Persistent challenges

Despite progress, AU responses to terrorism and violent extremism is not as holistic or coordinated as it should be. It views terrorism, transnational organised crime, small arms and light weapons, illicit financial flows, insecurity in border areas and remote 'ungoverned' regions, and illegal extraction of natural resources as separate but interlinked threats. These are, however, not only interlinked but increasingly reinforcing threats, emanating mostly from the same networks.

The AU has invested heavily in fund sourcing for African-led counterterrorism-related PSOs, and set up ASF policy frameworks and coordination structures for this. However, it has not deliberated on key drivers and enablers of continental terrorism. These include African and non-African 'charities', multinationals and states that fund terrorism. These organisations also manage finance for terror operations, facilitate financial transactions, buy terrorist-sourced natural resources, sell arms and other supplies to terror groups, and establish their communications and intelligence networks.

48%

AFRICA'S SHARE OF
GLOBAL DEATHS DUE
TO TERRORISM

The AU has not put a spotlight on these issues nor named and shamed those involved, let alone hold culprits accountable, because it lacks the means.

Experts also lament that African states either have poorly established intelligence agencies or are too suspicious of each other to share intelligence of terrorist activities.

The AU's preoccupation with military responses has also hindered its ability to help member states tackle governance deficits that have provided an enabling environment for terror groups. The groups exploit the grievances of local communities, expanding their networks, recruiting new members and extending their geographic reach.

Finding the nexus

Any robust response by the summit to the threat posed by terrorism would need to address the growing nexus and convergence of terrorism and conflict, UCGs and transnational organised crime. Institute for Security Studies expert Martin Ewi says the recent Mali and Burkina Faso coups linked directly to insecurity caused by terrorist attacks, and sitting governments' inability to respond or inaction.

In Burkina Faso, the wave of terrorist attacks more than doubled to 1 100 from 2020 to 2021. Despite former president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré's pledge to respond to terrorism, the military continued to be ill-equipped. Growing discontent over the government's inefficiency to counter terrorist attacks and the humanitarian crisis that ensued culminated in the military ousting of Kaboré in January 2022.

The military coup in Mali in August 2020 similarly followed months-long protests demanding the resignation of former president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's administration. While protest causes were multidimensional, security concerns were at the forefront. The coups have hampered the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, too. The fallout between France and the military junta leading the country led to the withdrawal of the French Barkhane force fighting jihadist groups.

This was followed by the announcement of Mali's withdrawal from the G5 Sahel force, a coalition formed by France comprising troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This may affect coordination against terrorist attacks in the Sahel. While there may be a nexus between UCGs and terrorism, the AU

may not be able to respond to it without first reacting independently to each threat.

How can the AU respond effectively to terrorism?

The AU's current strategy to control the spread of terrorism in Africa has failed. This is due largely to various institutional weaknesses, legislative lacunae, and the lack of policies to strengthen national, regional and continental resilience. The growing focus on PSOs has further encouraged states to prioritise often uncoordinated militaristic responses at the expense of robust solutions that include political, social, economic and financial measures. The high cost of PSOs and the misdirected focus on combating terrorist actions rather than terrorists has also made the current strategy ineffective in combating terrorism.

The Malabo summit stood at an important juncture to set a new path in the fight against terrorism in Africa. First, the AU should provide the political centre driving counterterrorism in Africa through continuous monitoring and evaluation of states' actions to ensure compliance and effective implementation of legal regimes.

Secondly, intelligence sharing and coordination must form the cornerstone of the new strategy to ensure intelligence-guided operations. Thirdly, the AU should focus on combating perpetrators of terrorist acts by blacklisting them, and implementing the African arrest warrant to facilitate cross-border pursuit, investigation and prosecution of terrorist suspects. It should also deprive them of safe havens and sources of finance.

Fourthly, combating the nexus between terrorism and organised crime should form the AU Strategy central pillar. This is not only to suppress their support and logistics base, but to prevent terrorists from turning to crime for survival or for organised syndicates to link with terrorists or use terrorist strategies. And fifthly, the AU should promote a whole-of-society approach to counterterrorism to encourage member states to strengthen practical cooperation with communities, civil society organisations, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Note: The outcomes of the Malabo summit will be discussed in the next issue of the PSC Report

Greater African Union support needed to fight Boko Haram

From 2021 to date, security challenges have increased in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB). So far in 2022, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) faction of Boko Haram has dominated insecurity. There has been a high civilian death toll due to attacks by Boko Haram, particularly the remnant elements of the Jama'atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (JAS). Simultaneously, banditry and intercommunal conflicts have persisted, compounding the devastation in the LCB and beyond, with Nigeria the epicentre of these challenges.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has been a key stakeholder supporting LCB States' responses to these security threats. The issues will again be discussed during the extraordinary African Union (AU) summit in Malabo at the end of the month and at a PSC session on 31 May.

Cameroon, the PSC chair for May 2022, is among the members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) involved in the struggle against violent extremism in the region. As they become more complex, the PSC's positioning should also be strengthened to better support the LCBC and its member countries.

Pre-existing and new threats

Since mid-2021, the number of intercommunal conflicts has increased, with far north Cameroon most affected. There have been hundreds of casualties, with many injured and enormous material damage exerted on communities. Relative calm has prevailed since January 2022. However, the humanitarian impact of the conflicts remains significant, with more than 30 000 Cameroonian refugees in Chad and thousands of internally displaced persons in Cameroon.

Banditry and abductions have remained rife in Nigeria, with attacks rampant in the country's northwest and northcentral zones. Rural communities in Zamfara in the northwest suffered significant losses following a major attack in early-January claiming at least 200 lives.

In late-March, militants targeted a train travelling from Nigeria's capital city Abuja. Explosives were detonated and the incident appeared to bear the trademarks of violent extremism, with indications of perpetrators working in collaboration with a Boko Haram breakaway faction, Ansaru. The sophistication

of the attack points to assistance beyond the ranks of so-called bandits.

During the first quarter of 2022, JAS fighters from Niger and Nigeria attacked civilians as the group continued to sustain its presence through the leadership of Bakura Doro. On 9 March, JAS killed 45 individuals in the Diffa region of Niger suspected of aiding security forces.

ISWAP follows a 'hearts-and-mind' approach in appealing to communities – helping to secure livelihoods while extorting money. ISWAP's affiliation to the Islamic State or ISIS was reaffirmed as the former declared allegiance to the new ISIS leader, Abu al-Hasan al-Hashimi al-Qurashi.

In far north Cameroon, there have been hundreds of casualties and injuries, and enormous damage

The group also persisted with attacks against security forces, as well as humanitarian and development entities, as evidenced by the abduction of aid workers in Monguno, Borno state. Meanwhile, ISWAP appears to be expanding its operation beyond the states already affected in Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe). Indeed, it claimed the attack on a police station in Kogi state in April and that of Suleja, near Abuja, in May.

Ansaru appears to be experiencing a resurgence, particularly in Nigeria. At the start of 2022, the group reaffirmed allegiance to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Similar to ISWAP's community-focused strategy, Ansaru appeals to (Muslim) communities as it claims to defend the Ummah.

Waves of disengagement of former fighters and associates of JAS have continued into 2022, even though massive numbers left the group in 2021 following the death of Abubakar Shekau. These disengagements are mainly in Nigeria and Cameroon involving a mix of civilians and combatants across gender lines.

AU support to combat Boko Haram

Since the beginning of joint kinetic responses to Boko Haram, LCB member states have appealed to the AU, mainly the PSC, to authorise the implementation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). Boko Haram threats were on the agenda of the 469th PSC meeting of 25 November 2014, which focused on efforts of affected countries within the LCBC framework.

On 29 January 2015, the PSC authorised the deployment of the MNJTF and validated its concept of operations on 3 March that year. The AU established a strategic support cell within the peace and security department to oversee the force, and to coordinate and manage assistance to partners. A team was set up at headquarters for technical and logistical support to the MNJTF. The AU is an important fundraiser for the structure.

As the LCBC adopts a more comprehensive approach against violent extremism through its Regional Stabilisation Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience (RS-SRR), the AU's contribution will again be crucial. The RS-SRR emerged from extensive consultations between LCBC and AU experts, as well as United Nations agencies, including the UN Development Programme, and other stakeholders.

The strategy was adopted on 30 August 2018 in Abuja. Its nine pillars include political cooperation, governance and the social contract, socioeconomic recovery and environmental sustainability, preventing violent extremism and peacebuilding, and disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement.

Call for enhanced PSC support

After well over a decade of effort, the situation remains as volatile, despite varied responses by LCB states and their partners. Moreover, 2021 and this year to date seem to have been characterised by an increased numbers of threats. This necessitates a deeper commitment to the implementation of RS-SRR's pillars, complemented by

scaling of responses. It also entails addressing the pace at which responses occur, considering especially how long community infrastructure replacement takes after destruction by Boko Haram factions.

Ansaru's allegiance to AQIM means that subsidiaries of the deadliest violent extremist groups, namely ISIS and al-Qaeda, are now present in the region. Studies have already shown the propensity of these groups to exploit the economies of violence and manipulate community conflicts to their advantage to continue to thrive in their criminal enterprises.

This crystallisation of these adverse circumstances does not augur well for the defence and security services, which are already severely tested by existing threats. This calls for even greater support from the AU; support that considers the specifics of current developments in devising adequate responses.

Greater intervention from the AU-PSC is needed in the LCB as insecurity, violence and killings spread

The affiliates of these violent extremist groups are also found in the Sahel. A country such as Niger, which straddles the Sahel and LCB, for example, has subsidiaries of these groups in both regions at the same time. Linkages between the Sahel and LCB are no longer just an idea, but a clear possibility.

This calls, on one hand, for harmonisation of inter-regional efforts between entities such as the LCBC and the G5 Sahel (if this one survives the actual crisis) and, on the other, proactive global support for these regions. This may take various forms and consist of technical, material, tactical and financial support to enhance security agendas.

It could be from the UN through the UN Security Council, the European Union or other donor countries already supporting the stabilisation agenda. This entails greater cooperation with global coalitions that have responded in the past against ISIS, for example. As the continental organisation that convenes all sub-regional entities, the AU should remain at the forefront of these processes to mobilise resources, coordinate inter-regional collaboration and inspire sequencing of agendas.

The AU and regional economic communities should support dialogue in Ethiopia

After almost two years of military conflict between the Federal government and Tigrayan forces, Ethiopia seems to have decided to resolve its most devastating militarised conflict peacefully. On 24 March 2022, the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared a humanitarian truce ‘to facilitate a free flow of emergency humanitarian aid into the Tigray region’.

This notion was reciprocated by the Tigrayan Peoples’ Liberation Front (TPLF) the next day. Since then, both government and TPLF forces, despite a recent uptick in war rhetoric from both, have observed the ‘humanitarian truce’ and cessation of hostilities.

Tigrayan forces complained of the number of humanitarian aid trucks entering Tigray when aid is being sent through the humanitarian corridor at the Afar-Tigray border. Tigrayan forces have withdrawn from much of the area they controlled in Amhara and Afar, and both these conflict actors seem to have been pressured by the government into the fold. This is an encouraging step to broker peace and signals mutual recognition of a stalemate by the two warring parties.

However, the current state is a temporary de-escalation. Given the intractability of the root causes of the conflict and the attendant social trauma, lasting peace among the parties requires several confidence-building and peacemaking instruments and modalities. Peacemaking efforts should also consider security issues that are intrinsically political, beyond the geographic scope of this military conflict. This requires bringing other armed forces, especially the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Oromia, on board.

The African Union (AU), regional economic communities (RECs) and neighbouring countries such as Kenya, which are reportedly involved in mediating the conflict, should capitalise on the truce and exert pressure for a negotiated political settlement.

Abiy’s parallel peacemaking routes

The violence and conflict in Ethiopia, including in the north, is as inherently related to contrasting ideologies about the country’s past and future as it is about power politics. The polarisation of the political stage over the years has triggered tension and violence, culminating in a

full-scale military confrontation in the north. However, the dispute is not confined to this region.

OLF-Shane, as the government has labelled it, has been active in Oromia. Efforts to resolve the confrontation amicably seem to have failed. Conversely, attempts to eliminate OLA militarily are yet to succeed. The government later declared it, with TPLF, a terror group.

Interestingly, after ending hostilities with Tigrayan forces and signaling its willingness to negotiate with TPLF, the state launched a military offensive to root out OLA in Oromia. If recent history is an indication, the viability of these parallel routes of peacemaking – negotiation with forces in the north and securitisation in the wider south – is questionable, to say the least.

Lasting peace among the parties requires several confidence-building and peacemaking instruments

It is high time the government sticks to the peaceful (negotiation and dialogue) route in Oromia and beyond as it did to resolve political and security predicaments in the north. However, this is easier said than done, for multiple actors are already involved in the militarised confrontations.

This confrontation between government and opposition forces has already heightened inter-ethnic animosity between Tigray, and Afar and Amhara. Throughout the conflict, the last-mentioned two regions have been involved in the war effort and were devastated by Tigrayan incursions into their territories. Memories of atrocities and social trauma are too fresh to consider a negotiated settlement. The government and the international community should redress not only the

economic devastation but the social and psychological upheaval suffered by Afar and Amhara communities.

National dialogue could transcend the political divide

Ethiopia recently constituted a national dialogue commission to mediate historic, cumulated and structural sociopolitical cleavages that have spurred conflict for decades. The commission is intended to facilitate dialogue among political elites and ordinary Ethiopians. Some political parties have refused to participate, citing inclusivity and transparency gaps in the lead-up to the commission's formation, the methodology of selecting commissioners and other issues.

The Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) are among the major actors that officially boycotted the process. Put simply, the legitimacy of the commission appears to be contested. However, as an independent organ, it could earn legitimacy and assert credibility by demanding the federal parliament remove TPLF and OLA from the terror list. The vice president of the ruling Prosperity Party, in a recent interview, seem to suggest as much.

The commission could earn legitimacy by demanding that the federal parliament remove TPLF and OLA from the terror list

The Ethiopian Political Parties Joint Council recently released a statement asking the government to delist the two groups and include them in the process. This sets the stage for the commission and the government to travel the dialogue route of peacemaking.

Given the social trauma of the war and intercommunal animosity reinforced by its discourse, convincing victims to consider dialogue and reconciliation for peacemaking could be difficult. Accordingly, the government and the international community should craft a 'trauma management' scheme for communities in war-torn areas. This could be done through coordinated support for reconstruction and rehabilitation of communities most affected, not only in the north.

The AU, RECs and the international community can play a significant role in encouraging confidence-building measures for and in the national dialogue process. On the other hand, they should realise that the government's securitisation approach in Oromia will prolong violence in and around the region.

A concerted effort is needed to convince the federal government to replicate its peacemaking approach in the north and negotiate with OLA. This would, in all likelihood, encourage the likes of OLA, OFC and ONLF to join the dialogue process. As a government confidence-booster, continental and regional organisations should commit to 'African solutions to African problems' and push back against the 'politics of the United Nations Security Council'.

24 March
2022

THE ETHIOPIAN
GOVERNMENT DECLARES
A HUMANITARIAN TRUCE

Cameroon-led May meetings cast spotlight on crucial continental themes

The *PSC Report* spoke to His Excellency Churchill Ewumbue-Monono, Cameroon's permanent representative to the African Union and PSC chairperson for May 2022.

Cameroon is chairing the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the seventh time. What is different now and what are the priorities?

The choice of issues for discussion is determined jointly by the PSC Secretariat, the African Union (AU) Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and the chair of the month.

The 10 substantive meetings for May were informed by Cameroon's foreign policy objectives and national interests, against the context of the priorities of the month. Our objectives of promoting international solidarity through humanitarian actions dictated the theme of the 4 May 2022 meeting.

The substantive meetings for May were informed by Cameroon's foreign policy objectives and national interests

The PSC has been a platform for Cameroon to express this objective, as seen in the meetings of 17 August and 24 August 2021. These discussed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) humanitarian activities in Africa and the implementation of the African Humanitarian Agency.

Fighting terrorism in Cameroon and Central Africa determined the theme of the 6 May meeting on transnational organised crime. It also decided the topics for 18 May – arms control – and 31 May on the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), where Cameroon has been active militarily and politically. Nation-building and commemoration of 50 years of Cameroon's National Unity Day on 20 May 2022 determined the theme 'Living together in peace' for 17 May 2022 and of civil-military relations for 18 May.

Cameroon's Pan-African vision of collective security through the African Standby Force, of which the

Douala-based AU Continental Logistics Base is a pillar, determined the theme for 19 May on the initiation of this structure. This vision motivated the open session on food security, the AU's theme for 2022.

As alluded to above, May 2022 marks special commemorations, which also include the 30th anniversaries of ICRC-AU cooperation, and of the United Nations Consultative Committee on Security in Central Africa. Also celebrated is the 20th anniversary of the AU and 59th anniversary of Africa Day.

Finally, Cameroon's chairship is set against the extraordinary summit in Malabo on 27 and 28 May, devoted to humanitarian actions, pledging, unconstitutional changes of government and terrorism. Almost all the meetings for the month are related to these themes.

What outcomes do you expect from the Malabo summit?

As a PSC member from the Central Africa region and the vice-president of the AU Sub-committee on Humanitarian Affairs, Cameroon has a double responsibility to ensure the success of the summit in its sister-nation. Previously, the AU Commission and the PSC organised several Pan-African conferences and high-level meetings to aggregate their interests in line with the chosen themes.

There was the ninth Humanitarian Symposium in Nairobi of November 2021 and the Accra Conference on Unconstitutional Change of Government of March 2022. The Lomé Conference on Political Transitions and the Fight against Terrorism in the Sahel and the Yaoundé Conference on the Humanitarian Situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) followed in April 2022. The meeting conclusions, which will be presented to the Malabo conference, encapsulate the aspirations, positions and expectations of the AU and the continent's citizens.

Cameroon will definitely play an important role in preparations for Malabo, as it will examine these conclusions and the chairperson's reports to be presented. More importantly, Cameroon's President Paul Biya is expected to address the Assembly as chairperson of the PSC at the level of heads of state and as a leader of a country affected by humanitarian crises and terrorism.

The summit will also be a platform to discuss African Governance Architecture (AGA) issues such as unconstitutional changes of government. African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) matters such as humanitarian actions and terrorism, will also be tabled.

The Council will hear about the humanitarian situation, with drought and conflicts creating a complex emergency and an increasing number of people facing forced displacement

Finally, it will be an opportunity for the AU and Africa to assess their capability and commitment to harnessing financial resources to address the continent's humanitarian crises. In Malabo, Africa's need for more than US\$14 billion against available funds of US\$991.7 million will be examined and pledges made to fill the gap of US\$13 billion.

The Horn of Africa and LCB are on the PSC's agenda for May. What are the major issues?

The Council expects a briefing on the Horn of Africa by the AU regional high representative and former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo on developments and AU mediation efforts in flashpoints. It will also hear about the humanitarian situation, at a time when drought and conflicts have created a complex emergency, with an increasing number of people facing forced displacement. Finally, the session might bring perspectives from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) secretariat and member states.

The LCB briefing will focus on the military and political fight against Boko Haram terrorism. The Multinational Joint Task Force commander will deliver a briefing, which is significant to Cameroon as a troop-contributing country. The LCB secretary-general will discuss the implementation of the AU's Regional Stabilisation Strategy and cooperation with partners such as the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. Cameroon will present outcomes from the LCB Governor's Forum in Yaoundé, which it hosted on 4 October 2021.

Meetings on thematic issues are becoming a regular trend. What about ongoing country-specific situations in Africa?

As indicated, the monthly programme is a joint decision. During its chairship of August 2021, Cameroon examined country-specific situations in its 3 August and 5 August meetings. These covered Chad, CAR, the Gambia, Libya, Lesotho and Somalia. Cameroon's earlier chairships

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addressed specific conflicts, notably Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire (2006), Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Comoros and Kenya (2008) and Egypt, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mali, Togo and Sudan/South Sudan (2013).

Through briefings on hotspots such as the Horn of Africa and the LCB, our 2022 chairship will also examine the security and humanitarian situations in some 10 countries in the regions. Whether programmed or not, we cannot avoid discussing emerging conflicts if they erupt during our chairship. For instance, on 4 May 2022, although it was not on Cameroon's agenda, the PSC discussed Somalia following al-Shabaab's attack on AU Transition Mission in Somalia forces the day before.

Cameroon's predecessor, Burundi, examined five country situations in its meeting of 14 April 2022. If Cameroon had continued these discussions, there would have been repetition and duplication. Themes do not preclude country-specific analysis because, during both open and closed sessions, PSC members share their experiences of the themes under review.

The PSC has an open session on 'Living together in peace'. What will it entail?

The session will focus on diversity management and the promotion of a culture of peace through tolerance, non-violence, inclusion, unity and solidarity. The theme is also a peacebuilding strategy to promote nation-building through national unity, reconciliation, integration and dialogue among communities.

The issue gained international prominence as a peacebuilding concept when, on 8 December 2017, UN Resolution 72/130 co-sponsored by Algeria, designated 16 May as UN Living Together in Peace Day. Among other things, the day promotes 'the desire to live together and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable harmony'.

Internationally, it denotes respect for religious and cultural diversity, as identity-generated conflicts proliferate and Samuel P Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' is gaining credence as a new world order. In Africa, with its countries' artificial borders and identity conflicts, challenges to nation-building and living together include tribalism, marginalisation, exclusion, fake news, hate speech and unequitable distribution of national resources.

Challenges to living together include tribalism, marginalisation, fake news and hate speech

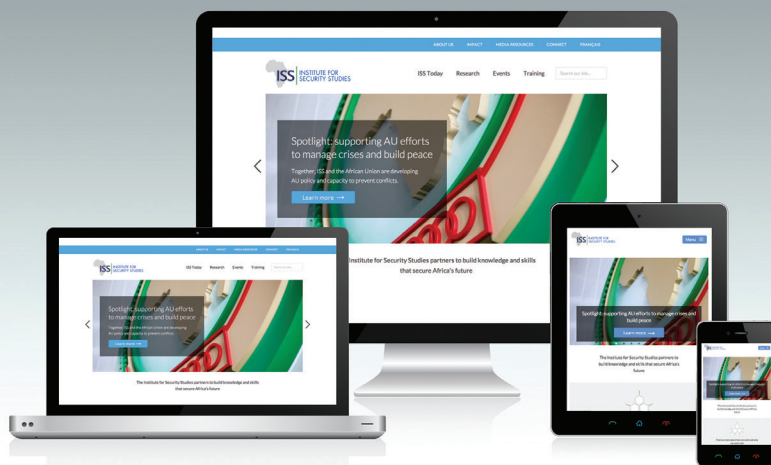
Living Together in Peace Day was adopted in December 2017 and the PSC devoted its meetings of 5 November 2019 and 27 May 2020 to the theme. Under Angola's chairship, the Council also highlighted the topic in the December 2019 ministerial meeting in Luanda on national reconciliation, restoration of peace and rebuilding of national cohesion. In 2020, Morocco hosted the UN Global Forum for Alliance of Civilizations, which also added value to the theme.

The theme is also of national interest to Cameroon and its National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM), created on 23 January 2017, predates the UN initiative. On 11 April 2019, eight months before the first PSC meeting on the subject, the NCPBM held a one-day brainstorming conference in Yaoundé on living together.

Cameroon also organised a major national dialogue in October 2019, which addressed the issue. Finally, the 17 May PSC meeting on the theme will be staged against the backdrop of the 50th anniversary of its National Unity Day on 20 May 2022. This will be a fitting testament to its commitment to living together in peace.

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

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Contributors to this issue

Shewit Woldemichael, ISS Addis Ababa researcher

Tegbaru Yared Tekile, ISS Addis Ababa researcher

Remadji Hoinathy, ISS Dakar senior researcher

Contact

Liesl Louw-Vaudran

Consultant to the *PSC Report*

ISS Pretoria

Email: llouw@issafrica.org

Development partners



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