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On the Agenda

28th AU summit elections: revenge of the small states

At the 28th summit of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, the heads of state and government elected Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chad's minister of foreign affairs, to succeed Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the helm of the AU Commission (AUC). At its previous summit in Kigali in July 2016, none of the candidates for this position managed to get the required two-thirds majority.

Faki, who has been Chad's foreign minister since 2008, finally won the contest in the seventh round of voting, with 39 votes out of 54. Fifteen states abstained. He prevailed over Kenya's Amina Mohamed (against whom he competed in the run-off), Senegal's Abdoulaye Bathily, Botswana's Phelekezela Mampoko and Equatorial Guinea's Agapito Mba Mokuy.

Cross-regional support

Faki succeeded despite the fact that he faced another contender within the Central Region – potentially splitting the votes of his home region. However, despite this obstacle and his being from the region with the least number of states, he was able to get support from outside his region during the first round.

Faki's experience as minister of foreign affairs in the area of peace and security is largely seen as the reason for his victory in Addis Ababa

PSC Chairperson

H.E Hope Tumukunde Gasatura

Ambassador of Rwanda to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU

Current members of the PSC:

Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda, Zambia

This cross-regional support allowed him come in at second place in the first round, behind Kenya's foreign secretary. It appears that in the subsequent run-off he benefited from votes within Eastern Africa, the region that had vowed to support Mohamed.

Faki's experience as minister of foreign affairs in the area of peace and security is largely seen as the reason for his victory in Addis Ababa. In this capacity he was notably involved in the management of crises in Darfur and Libya. None of his competitors could claim to have a similar level of experience that most heads of state would find as reassuring.

The end of consensus politics

Faki's close victory over Mohamed, who trailed him by only three votes in the run-off, as well as the abstention of 15 member states in the final round,

confirmed that the era of choosing an AUC chairperson by consensus has come to an end.

This was already the case during the bruising contest between Dlamini Zuma and her rival, outgoing chairperson Jean Ping, in 2012. During the last round of voting in July 2012 Dlamini Zuma also faced 15 abstentions.

Before 2012, however, there was no public campaigning for the position and decisions on the next AUC chairperson were made through consensus. In 2004 the first chairperson of the AUC, former Malian president Alpha Oumar Konare, was elected without competition and in 2008 Ping was elected by a two-thirds majority in the first round.

The last two elections were much more competitive and divisive. The main difference between 2012 and January 2017 is that the divide during Faki's election was not confined to regional blocs, and candidates managed to garner support continent-wide.

Faki's close victory over Mohamed confirmed that the era of choosing an AUC chairperson by consensus has come to an end

Smaïl Chergui the only incumbent elected

Following the election of the chairperson, Ghana's Thomas Kwesi Quartey was elected deputy chairperson.

The most high-profile race for the position of commissioner was that of Peace & Security. Two regional powers, Algeria and Nigeria, were contesting this strategic portfolio. The incumbent, Smaïl Chergui of Algeria, was re-elected by a narrow margin. He was up against Fatima Kyari Mohamed of Nigeria and managed to get 36 votes – the minimum required for a win – in the seventh round of voting.

Minata Samaté Cessouma of Burkina Faso was elected Commissioner for Political Affairs, replacing Nigeria's Aisha Abdullahi, who did not run for re-election.

Regional and gender balance complicates elections

In addition, Amani Abou-Zeid of Egypt was elected in the portfolio of Infrastructure and Energy, while Amira Elfadil of Sudan was elected Commissioner for Social Affairs, replacing the incumbent Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko (Sierra Leone). Albert Muchanga (Zambia) was elected in the portfolio of Trade and Industry, replacing Fatima Haram Acyl (Chad). Correa Leonel Josefa Sacko of Angola was elected Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Apart from Chergui, none of the other incumbents managed to win another mandate. This was largely because of the required national, regional and

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OUT OF

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FAKI'S FINAL SCORE

gender balance in the commission. Candidates from states or regions that had already filled their quotas could not be elected again. This was true for Kaloko in Social Affairs, Acyl in Trade and Industry, and Anthony Mothae Maruping in Economic Affairs.

Due to this required balance in the AUC, two positions have yet to be filled. The portfolios of Economic Affairs and of Human Resources, Science & Technology will be decided upon during the next session of the Executive Council, either to a male candidate from the Eastern Region or a woman from Central Africa.

Small and middle-sized states fill the main positions

While some of the heavyweight countries and those contributing the most to the AU, such as Algeria, Angola and Egypt, were able to keep positions within the AUC, the general configuration differs from the previous one.

The new AUC illustrates the return to the status quo ante, when small and middle-sized countries held the main positions

From 2012 to 2017 nationals from regional powers such as South Africa, Kenya, Algeria and Nigeria filled critical positions as chairperson, deputy chairperson and commissioners of Peace & Security and Political Affairs. The new AUC illustrates the return to the status quo ante, when small and middle-sized countries held the main positions within the AUC.

Apart from the commissioner of Peace & Security, neither the chairperson nor his deputy or the commissioner for Political Affairs hail from a state with more than 30 million inhabitants.

After South Africa broke the informal rule forbidding regional powers to run for the top position in 2012, there seems to be a shift back to the traditional state of affairs.

This election showed the struggle among many regional powers to win a position within the AUC. Kenya lost the race for chairperson despite strong lobbying by President Uhuru Kenyatta. Candidates from Nigeria and Angola respectively lost the races for Peace & Security and Political Affairs.

Former ambassadors to Addis Ababa to drive reform

Of the eight commissioners elected on 30 January, four (Quartey, Chergui, Cessouma and Muchanga) have in the past held the critical position of representative of their respective states to the AU. This element is essential, as the reform of the organisation proposed by Rwandan President Paul Kagame will be a core task of the new AUC. It could thus provide an incentive for a more positive relationship between the AUC and the Permanent Representative Committee in Addis Ababa.

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COMMISSIONERS ELECTED

Pull quote: The reform of the organisation proposed by President Paul Kagame will be a core task of the new AUC

Challenges for peace and security

The agenda of the new commission will be dominated by the implementation of the Kagame reforms and the master plan for ‘silencing the guns in 2020’. The report of the Kagame commission calls for, among other things, reforming the PSC to improve its efforts in preventing and managing crises.

In this regard, the challenge for the new AUC will be the coordination between a chairperson with strong experience in this area and the commissioners of Peace & Security and Political Affairs.

The area of conflict prevention, which overlaps the departmental boundaries of the current institutional setting, will be another critical challenge.

Therefore, a good relationship and cooperation between the commissioner of Peace & Security and the commissioner of Political Affairs – both former representatives to the AU – will be crucial to ensure the effectiveness of AU’s responses to prevent crises.

Name	Position	Country	Region
Moussa Faki Mahamat	Chairperson	Chad	Central Region
Thomas Kwesi Quartey	Deputy Chairperson	Ghana	Western Region
Smaïl Chergui	Peace and Security	Algeria	
Minata Cessouma Samaté	Political Affairs	Burkina Faso	Western Region
Amani Abou-Zeid	Infrastructure and Energy	Egypt	Northern Region
Amira Mohamed Elfadil	Social Affairs	Sudan	Eastern Region
Albert Muchanga	Trade and Industry	Zambia	Southern Region
Correa Leonel Josefa Sacko	Rural Economy and Agriculture	Angola	Southern Region
Vacant	Economic Affairs		
Vacant	Human Resources, Science & Technology		



On the Agenda

28th AU summit: the PSC's roadmap to peace still sketchy

At the AU summit, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) presented its six-monthly report on its activities and outlined its 'Roadmap for silencing the guns by 2020'. The much-awaited roadmap, however, still seems to be a working document with deadlines and activities set in tabular format. The PSC also expressed its frustration at the lack of implementation of its decisions, notably on Burundi.

The PSC is called upon to be the 'locomotive' for ridding Africa of conflicts over the next three years. This is according to its own roadmap to achieve this goal, presented to heads of state at the recent 28th AU summit.

Yet with many countries still suffering from violent conflict, this will be extremely difficult to implement.

Experience shows that in many cases the organisation's hands are tied in the face of an authoritarian government

The PSC admits that 'most crises and violent conflicts in Africa are being driven by poverty, economic hardships, violation or manipulation of constitutions, violation of human rights, exclusion, inequalities, marginalization and mismanagement of Africa's rich ethnic diversity'. It also takes a swipe at some governments on the continent by saying that they 'have not been able to manage effective political transitions, partly due to the fact that the erstwhile liberation movements have taken too long to transform themselves into dynamic governing parties'. In addition, according to the report, conflicts should also be seen against the background of three major tragedies: slavery, colonisation and the exploitation of Africa's natural resources.

How can the AU and the PSC make a real difference, given this complex environment that so often leads to conflict? Experience shows that in many cases the organisation's hands are tied in the face of an authoritarian government clinging on to its sovereignty regardless of criticism from the rest of the continent.

Still no progress in Burundi and South Sudan

In its six-monthly report, of which the *PSC Report* has seen a copy, the PSC once again laments the fact that Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza has still not kept his word about allowing 200 AU observers and military experts into the country. Nkurunziza had agreed to this when AU heads of state

2020

THE YEAR THE AU PLANS
TO SILENCE THE GUNS

visited him in February 2016, just after the PSC's planned protection force to Burundi was shot down by AU leaders at its 26th summit in Addis Ababa. To date, only 68 personnel have been deployed and the Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Burundi and the AU Commission is yet another unfulfilled promise by Nkurunziza.

Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza has not kept his word about allowing 200 AU observers and military experts into the country

Burundi is not the only conflict where the PSC has been hamstrung by a litany of problems and obstacles. In South Sudan, for example, plans to send a Regional Protection Force (RPF), made up of African troops, have still not seen the light of day. Will the RPF meet the same fate as the force for Burundi?

An important difference between the RPF for South Sudan and the stillborn African Protection Force for Burundi (Mission Africaine Pour la Protection au Burundi, or MAPROBU) is that the force for South Sudan has been mandated by the United Nations (UN) Security Council and will be funded by the UN. Given the complexity of regional meddling in the war in South Sudan and the hard line taken by South Sudanese leaders across the spectrum, deploying this force will be no easy task.

In the section on South Sudan in the six-monthly report, the PSC notes, for example, that South Sudanese Minister of Defence Kuol Manyang Juuk announced in January 2017 that 'it was no longer necessary to deploy the RPF, as the situation on the ground had improved'. From the rest of the PSC's analysis, however, it seems clear there is still a determination to deploy the RPF. In its final decisions, the 28th Assembly once again called upon the government of South Sudan, the countries in the region and the UN to 'accelerate the deployment of the RPF' to protect civilians. Time will tell whether this force will be deployed in good time to save lives after more than three years of civil war in South Sudan.

Money problems plague peace missions

In many instances, the good intentions of the PSC are undermined by a lack of funding. This is especially true when it comes to its African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). While the report of the PSC paints a fairly rosy picture of 'large swathes of territory previously controlled by Al Shabaab' that AMISOM and the Somali government have managed to 'recover, pacify and consolidate', the events of the past six months indicate that Somalia is still far from being safe.

In its report the PSC asks the UN to authorise an additional AMISOM troop total of 4 500 and laments the fact that it still does not have adequate military hardware to carry out its mission. To date, only three helicopters have been forthcoming for AMISOM, from the government of Kenya.

As it has noted many times before in its statements and press releases, AMISOM is in dire need of more funds. This is after the decision by the European Union to reduce its contribution to salaries by 20%. At the opening of the 28th Assembly, new UN Secretary General António Guterres did speak about the persistent request by the AU for 'predictable funding' from the UN and pledged to argue the AU's case.

The Assembly called upon the government of South Sudan, the countries in the region and the UN to accelerate the deployment of the RPF

Overlapping plans create confusion

The PSC's 'Master roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns by 2020', endorsed by the AU Assembly at the summit, is presented as a blueprint for ending war in Africa. It is meant to do this by focusing on specific issues or 'challenges' such as arms trafficking, money laundering, terrorism, governance, migration, etc. It lists the various modalities to mobilise organs within the AU structure, together with deadlines and sources of funding. For example, to end the illicit flow of arms into Africa – certainly one of the major causes of the escalation of conflicts – the PSC proposes that suppliers and recipients should be stopped from carrying out this

harmful trade. To do this, AU members should ratify the relevant international instruments, suppliers of illicit arms should be named and shamed, including by the AU summits, and illicit weapons should be identified and destroyed.

The roadmap, thrashed out during a retreat of PSC members in Lusaka, Zambia in November last year, is, however, not that different from the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that has existed for years. APSA also has a roadmap for 2016–2020.

The master roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns by 2020 is presented as a blueprint for ending war in Africa

While the PSC roadmap is more specific in listing the various threats to peace, the APSA roadmap deals with thematic issues such as conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. The various organs of the AU, such as the PSC and the Panel of the Wise, as well as subregional mechanisms for peace, are seen as the building blocks of APSA. Essentially, the PSC roadmap could supplement that of APSA, which is the broader framework.

In the end, what matters is the difference that these plans and ideals drawn up by AU officials will make to the situation on the ground. The PSC roadmap does have the advantage that it includes clear deadlines so that citizens can keep the organisation accountable for implementing the various steps that the AU members have decided to follow.

On the Agenda

28th AU summit: searching for a new African consensus in the age of Trump



A dark cloud has hung over the AU since Brexit and the new American isolationist policies, and has prompted AU officials to call for greater unity among member states. At the 28th AU summit, the message was that Africa could only weather this storm by relying on its own resources. Yet Africa is more divided than ever.

In her opening address to the AU's Executive Council at the summit, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the outgoing chairperson of the AU Commission, said that 'Africa's only protection in these treacherous global waters' was to honour commitments such as setting up its own Continental Free Trade Area by 2017, the deadline set by the AU.

The 'neo-conservative pushback' against women's rights and the threat to multilateralism called for the revival and strengthening of 'the spirit of pan-Africanism', she said.

Morocco's application to rejoin the AU created a stir that pitted countries and regions against one another

Abdalla Hamdok, acting director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, said that 'regional cooperation and policy coordination for Africa's development cannot be emphasised enough'.

These calls, along with statements made from the podium and the presence of so many heads of state at the summit, created a semblance of unity.

Pan-African solidarity a thing of the past?

On a number of crucial issues, however, it is clear that the continent is far from united, and there is little evidence of the pan-African solidarity that prevailed during the Organization of African Unity's early days. Consensus politics resulting from a common desire for unity is, to a large extent, a thing of the past.

For example, Morocco's application to rejoin the AU, which was accepted by an overwhelming majority of states, created a stir that pitted countries and regions against one another, with apparently little appetite for compromise.

'Sitting in the AU with Morocco as a state, while the whole foundation of the AU is built on the struggle against colonialism, is actually unthinkable,' one Southern African diplomat told the *PSC Report* on the margins of the summit.

Morocco

THE AU'S 55TH MEMBER STATE

For many African states emerging more recently from colonialism and apartheid, the continued claims by Morocco over Western Sahara go against everything they stand for. They believe Morocco should not have been allowed in before Western Sahara was given independence. Emotional arguments were made in the discussions during the Assembly of the summit against Morocco's entry into the organisation without any pre-conditions.

Yet despite these reservations, the fact remains that a majority of states believe that Morocco has a right to be in the AU, even if only from a geographical point of view.

Algeria, a staunch supporter of Western Sahara, conceded this ahead of the summit. Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra told Radio France International that Morocco's demand should be accepted for the sake of 'geographical coherence'. However, he said, 'historical coherence, based on the struggle for liberation, decolonisation and the victory over apartheid' should also be respected.

The contentious issue is now whether Morocco should be allowed to campaign from within the AU for the expulsion of the Sahrawi Arab Republic from the organisation. Countries such as Algeria and South Africa would strongly oppose this.

At no stage in the run-up to the vote did outgoing AU Commission chairperson Dlamini Zuma emerge as a unifying figure

Negative campaigning for AU Commission chairperson

On the hot topic of the summit, namely the election of a new chairperson of the AU Commission, competition among states also led to some negative campaigning.

Five candidates were on the table, seemingly representing regional blocs, but there was no clear solidarity in the regions of the AU. In Central Africa, for example, two candidates were fielded: Chad's Moussa Faki Mahamat, who emerged victorious (see page ?) and Agapito Mba Mokuy, the foreign minister of Equatorial Guinea.

Instead of seeking to make compromises for the sake of unity, it seems states are now going directly into

elections, ready to fight it out publicly. At no stage in the run-up to the vote did outgoing AU Commission chairperson Dlamini Zuma emerge as a unifying figure. On the contrary; some say her positioning and South Africa's strong bid to have her elected in 2012 exacerbated these rifts.

In addition, AU member states have for some time been at loggerheads over their membership of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Again in Addis Ababa, states such as Senegal, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire argued against a call by the AU for African signatories to the Rome Statute to withdraw from the ICC. South Africa, which has already withdrawn, is in favour of greater African solidarity against the ICC. In the end the Assembly approved a 'collective withdrawal strategy' drawn up by the open-ended ministerial committee on the ICC, but this is not binding upon member states. Accession to the Rome Statute remains a sovereign decision by individual member states.

The divisions among the continent's leaders are not only evident when it comes to the big issues and decisions that confront them

The divisions among the continent's leaders are not only evident when it comes to the big issues and decisions that confront them. More mundane matters, such as the election of officials for AU organs (e.g., judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, members of the AU advisory board on corruption and others), are also seeing confrontational campaigning as never before. Voting by the Executive Council on a number of these positions dragged on for hours during its meetings before a winning candidate emerged.

Elections for the international system no longer based on compromise

In addition, there are complaints that some member states are not following a longstanding AU practice when it comes to election to key positions in the international system, such as non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council and membership of other UN

committees and commissions. The African candidates for these positions were usually assigned following a lengthy and orderly process coordinated within the various regions months before the actual decision. Consensus would then be reached through a process of give-and-take, and compromises reached. The final candidates would be endorsed by the Assembly at the AU summit and, when voting day came, all African countries were supposed to vote for the slate chosen by the continent.

Lately, however, African countries have put their names in the hat directly to the UN or whichever international body was holding elections, without the AU's endorsement. 'This is a breach of the way things are normally done in the AU. Many people think that these countries who do this should be sanctioned,' said a former AU ambassador.

Does this open confrontation between states mean the AU is becoming more democratic? Is this a better way to go about things than consensus politics behind closed doors, where the will of the strongest role player prevails – usually powerful states within the AU?

It is not only at the AU where states lobby for positions. Political intrigues of this sort abound in multilateral organisations such as the UN. However, rather than having openly acrimonious debates and voting that ends in a deadlock, these organisations tend to use negotiation and compromise. For multilateral organisations to move forward, states should clearly define their interests and positions, and be willing to compromise.

Lip service to unity

At the summit, various leaders, including the new chairperson of the AU, Guinean President Alpha Condé, repeated the call for Africa to stand together in an increasingly troubled world.

In the corridors of the summit building officials also recalled the important steps that had been taken towards greater solidarity on the continent, such as the recent successes by the regional organisation, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), to oust

The Gambia's ex-president Yahya Jammeh through a show of force and unity among leaders willing to uphold democracy. There is no doubt that this was a major achievement and set a precedent for dealing with leaders who cling to power.

At the summit, various leaders repeated the call for Africa to stand together in an increasingly troubled world

The AU Commission also emphasised that economic trade blocs are functioning better and that efforts to create the continental free trade area are progressing. Pan-African campaigns launched by the AU in the framework of Agenda 2063 – such as rooting out archaic practices that are harmful to women, or efforts to harness the blue economy – are also seeing success thanks to the combined efforts of the AU and member states.

Yet when it comes to decision-making within the AU, there is still a long way to go. African states are seemingly threatened by increasing globalisation, and are clinging to their sovereignty without budging from their positions, regardless of the consequences.

The AU and the new commission that emerged from this summit can do better to promote the ideals of African solidarity through its leadership and setting an example of unity of purpose.



Situation Analysis

How the AU can avoid reinventing the wheel in Guinea-Bissau

The political instability in Guinea-Bissau was on the agenda of the PSC several times last year. On 18 November 2016 President Jose Mario Vaz appointed a new prime minister, Umaro Sissoco Embalo, following failed attempts to find a consensus candidate for this position. Yet despite efforts from ECOWAS, the AU and the UN, the problems in Guinea-Bissau persist.

In Guinea-Bissau the situation on the surface often seems to belie the deeper and darker problems facing the country.

On 26 November 2016 the headquarters of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) – the movement that led the liberation of Guinea-Bissau – seemed set for a celebration; a Saturday afternoon party. Loud music boomed from speakers, and people laughed and talked excitedly in the auditorium, which was bedecked with flags and a large banner celebrating the PAIGC's 60 years. Slowly, the auditorium filled up. But the festive atmosphere masked the gravity of the situation, and did little to foreshadow what would later unfold.

A few hours into the event, the PAIGC issued a 'no-confidence' communiqué to Vaz – who is from the same party. The communiqué is symbolic of the continued instability within Guinea-Bissau's fractured political system, where ongoing tensions between actors threaten fragile peacebuilding gains.

A multitude of stakeholders

The crisis has led to engagement from a multitude of international organisations and stakeholders.

The UN, ECOWAS and several bilateral donors and partners have all been involved in missions, mediation processes and political frameworks aimed at achieving sustainable peace and preventing conflict in the country.

The AU has also shown interest in increasing its currently small presence and role in the country. Such increased engagement would form part of efforts to revitalise the AU's post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) framework, and is part of a process in which it expects to have a greater impact in assisting post-conflict states. The process would be initiated through the development of a post-conflict needs assessment.

18 Nov 2016

UMARO SISSOCO EMBALO
BECOMES PRIME MINISTER

In Guinea-Bissau international responses to the crisis have often included analysis and needs assessments aimed at understanding the root causes of the crisis. Needs assessment missions are a way for organisations and actors to identify their own strategies; plot appropriate courses of action; and mobilise resources and expertise.

However, while taking cognisance of the complexity of the situation, it is crucial that when international actors assess their roles, they avoid reinventing the wheel.

International responses to the crisis have often included analysis and needs assessments aimed at understanding the root causes of the crisis

A continuous process of instability

Guinea-Bissau's political system can be described as a continuous, albeit confusing, process of instability, coups and frequent changes of government. Since independence in 1974 no elected government has been able to complete its mandate. After a transition of two years following the 2012 coup, the country organised elections, leading to some degree of optimism. But just when stability seemed to be in sight, a new wave of conflict once again unmoored the country.

The PAIGC has been on a war footing since the 2014 Congress of Cacheu, where the Congress nominated Vaz to be the future president-elect of the republic. This increased the deep division between groups supporting Vaz and those in favour of the party president, Domingos Simões Pereira.

Since the Congress of Cacheu five different prime ministers have been sworn in, and the institutional crisis seems set to continue.

ECOWAS, which has a long history of engagement in the country, has been leading a negotiation process since the second half of 2016. The process has brought together different political figures, religious leaders and civil society representatives. But while political agreements were reached in Bissau and Conakry, they had little impact on the political and institutional crisis.

Strategic plans lead to nowhere

The lack of success of Guinea-Bissau's peacebuilding processes is not due to a lack of effort to understand the dynamics and root causes of the conflict. Plans to get the country out of instability do exist, and plenty of them: national development plans, strategic visions, priority plans and fragility assessments abound.

Nationally, the government developed two iterations of a Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper, which were overtaken by a national strategic vision named Terra Ranka. More recently, in the context of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, Guinea-Bissau has been developing a fragility assessment to once again identify the root causes of stability and its potential trajectory towards sustainable peace.

Internationally, the UN developed its own range of plans to inform strategic direction in its responses and progress monitoring, including the Strategic Assessment Mission, Peacebuilding Priority Plans and UN Development Assistance Framework.

For the AU, previous assessments and plans provide several lessons on how it might succeed in increasing its engagement. The plethora of existing plans must be assessed, since it is clear that these are far from being effective – some of them read more like shopping lists than lists of priorities.

The plethora of existing plans must be assessed, since it is clear that these are far from being effective

The AU shouldn't reinvent the wheel

This raises one of the most critical challenges to effective, sustainable peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau: many of the plans end up paying little attention to what is actually required (at a technical and political level) to achieve the intended results.

As an important first step, the AU should build on existing assessments. The above-mentioned plans note similar trends and causes. For instance, they all refer to the importance of addressing the role of the military, and the need for security sector reform. The challenge posed

by the lack of development is also emphasised, particularly with regard to social cohesion. The various needs assessments and plans also refer to the importance of strengthening institutions – including political parties and the national assembly.

Recent lessons show that it is critical to avoid making decisions without questioning viability, along with existing and future political buy-in.

The attempt to achieve some degree of stability through the ECOWAS mediation process highlights the importance of identifying long-term needs. The mediation calls for a roundtable process to be created, which would develop a stability pact and identify future courses of action. However, since the signing of the agreement in Conakry and Bissau, very few people actually believe that the process might actually yield stability and resolve the political impasse.

And what can be done to avoid a level of cynicism in developing new approaches?

It is critical that in developing action plans, actors such as the AU not only identify what needs to be done but also provide a critical analysis of *whether* and *how* it can be done, including the means to ensure that responses are effective.

In Guinea-Bissau the realities on the ground often obscure the deeper causes of instability that bubble below the surface

Existing frameworks must be utilised, critiqued and advanced. By bringing that discussion to an internal bureaucratic and institutional context, the AU would be able to identify its own comparative advantages and institutional capacity to be effective.

In Guinea-Bissau the realities on the ground often obscure the deeper causes of instability that bubble below the surface. For the AU, it is critical to acknowledge and deal with both.

In identifying its potential and current roles in Guinea-Bissau, the AU must have the courage to reflect on and identify its own strengths and weaknesses; not only the dynamics on the ground. As such, courage is required to support the development of plans that read less like shopping lists and more like actual guidelines that could realistically assist the country in overcoming fragility.

Addis Insight

Elections in 2017: can the AU up its game?



The AU Department of Political Affairs will have a lot on its plate this year, with a number of important elections taking place. To have any impact, AU election observers will have to do more to communicate their reports and the AU chairperson should speak up about flawed election processes.

The presidential elections that took place in Benin and Ghana in 2016 were, thankfully, peaceful and transparent. If it had not been for the polls that led to a change of leadership in these two West African countries, last year would have been defined almost exclusively by its contested election outcomes.

Across the continent incumbent presidents clung to power amid widespread accusations of fraud

Across the continent, from Gabon to Zambia and from Chad to Uganda, incumbent presidents clung to power amid widespread accusations of fraud, manipulation of electoral processes and blanket restrictions on social media.

The list of 2017 elections published by the AU's Department of Political Affairs is much shorter than that of 2016, with only two presidential elections (Rwanda and Liberia) and two general elections (Kenya and Angola) that could see the appointment of a new president. To this list should be added the election of a new president in Somalia, postponed to this month, and presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – now to be held in December 2017.

Election observation often just a rubber stamp

The AU sends observer missions to all these elections – there were 19 in total in 2016 – but is often accused of merely rubber-stamping the results, regardless of whether they are free or fair.

In an interview with the *PSC Report* at the end of last year (see PSC Report issue 87), AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Aisha Abdullahi said that the AU had improved its system of observing elections by looking more comprehensively at a country's political situation ahead of elections. It followed a 'multi-pronged approach' that included sending pre-election assessment missions ahead of time – and not only a day or two before the polls, she said. In that way, it could assess whether the playing field was level before voting day, which it very often is not.

On paper, this approach looks excellent. However, such long-term observation missions are very expensive and the AU often has to rely on donor funding to



IMPORTANT ELECTIONS IN 2017

carry them out. The many other factors that are also at play in the interaction between the AU and its member states mean that these missions are often of little consequence.

Little visibility in Gabon

In Gabon, for example, AU observers made a comprehensive statement noting imbalances in the media coverage of the various candidates; a lack of full participation by civil society; and a refusal by some electoral staff to allow observers to enter polling stations on voting day. This preceded the post-election crisis of August and September 2016, in which opposition leader Jean Ping challenged the victory of the incumbent Ali Bongo. The report, however, got little attention.

On the other hand, the European Union (EU) observer mission – which said much of the same in the run-up to the polls – made sure it captured the media spotlight to promote its analysis and criticism of the process. The EU has a long history of independent election observation.

Any strong continental action on disputed results largely depends on the political will of the regional organisation dealing with the matter

The PSC subsequently also became involved in the post-election crisis in Gabon and requested the AU Commission to send ‘eminent members from high Francophone jurisdictions’ to Libreville to assist its Constitutional Court in arbitrating in the election dispute. This never happened, and Ping lost his battle to have the results overturned.

In the end, and this is likely to be the case again in 2017, any strong continental action on disputed results largely depends on the political will of the regional organisation dealing with the matter.

Last year, three of the most contested elections (in Gabon, Chad and the Republic of Congo) took place in Central Africa, where the regional organisation, the Economic Community of Central African States, is hardly functioning.

ECOWAS’s successful intervention in The Gambia

On the other hand, ECOWAS is far more dynamic. Regional heads of state travelled to Banjul several times in December 2016 to try to convince President Yahya Jammeh to step down after his defeat in the Gambian elections of 1 December.

In the end, after the deployment of ECOWAS troops and mediation by, notably, Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Jammeh stepped down and fled The Gambia. His successor, Adama Barrow, returned to The Gambia at the end of January after being sworn in on 19 January.

19 January 2017

PRESIDENT ADAMA BARROW
SWORN IN

In 2017 the AU Commission is again likely to be held hostage by strong personalities and influential members when it comes to elections. In Rwanda, where presidential elections are being held on 3 August, President Paul Kagame is expected to be a shoo-in for re-election after a constitutional amendment in December 2015 made it possible for him to run for a third seven-year term.

In 2017 the AU Commission is again likely to be held hostage by strong personalities and influential members when it comes to elections

Kagame is an influential leader, not only in his region but also on the continent. It would be surprising if Addis Ababa indicated so much as a minor questioning of his expected victory.

Also in August, Angola is expected to hold general elections. President José Eduardo dos Santos has indicated that he is not planning to run again, but his party – the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola – is widely expected to win. Dos Santos will hand-pick his successor. Here, also, the AU is not expected to play a major role – unless things go drastically wrong and the regional organisation, the Southern African Development Community, has to step in. At this stage, such a scenario seems unlikely.

Tense election run-up in Kenya

Kenyans are also going to the polls in hotly contested elections in the same month. The run-up to the elections has been characterised by tough politicking, and observers fear that violence might break out before or after the polls.

In these elections, issues of the freeness and fairness of the polls are hugely important. The main wrangling, currently, is over who should sit on the electoral commission and how voting should be done.

Here the AU could play a meaningful role in the long-term observation of elections and by providing technical support. After so many years of trial and error across the continent, countries are still struggling to find viable electoral systems – either manual or electronic – that

satisfy all parties and that can ensure that polls are free and fair. The AU could assist in helping countries to learn from best practices in neighbouring states.

Jakkie Cilliers, Head of African Futures and Innovation at the Institute for Security Studies noted that the most important drawback of AU election missions is that they are ‘generally politically managed, and their results essentially predetermined by officials who are elected by the same persons they have to oversee’.

He added ‘The AU needs to establish a credible election observation mission at arm’s-length from the Commission, or enter into a partnership with civil society if it wants to gain credibility in this domain.’

In her *PSC Report* interview last year, Abdullahi said that her department had been tasked with reviewing all elections that had taken place in Africa between 2012 and 2016 ‘to critically look at lessons learnt from these observations’.

When it comes to elections, the AU can rely on a number of key documents that member states have adopted

When it comes to elections, the AU can rely on a number of key documents that member states have adopted. Chief among these is the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which provides clear guidelines to ensure that polls are free and fair.



PSC Interview

'You can't fight terror in Mali with a peacekeeping force'

The *PSC Report* spoke to former president Pierre Buyoya, AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, about the resurgence of terror attacks in Mali and what to do about it.

Mali recently experienced the worst suicide attack yet perpetrated in the country. According to some reports there were 77 deaths following the attack in Gao. What is your reaction?

It is an extremely serious event for Mali and for the region. This attack came at a time that we were starting to implement the peace accord that followed the Algiers negotiations through deploying joint patrols, made up of the CMA [*Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad*], the *Plateform* [pro-government militias] and the Malian army. This joint military unit, called the Operational Coordination Mechanism [*Mécanisme Opérationnel de Coordination*, or MOC], was just going to start its work and then it was hit.

This is a direct attack against the peace process by the terrorist groups. It's extremely damaging because the first joint patrols were put in place after a lot of effort and negotiations that lasted more than a year.

It's a message to say we are against the implementation of the peace accord

It's a message to say we are against the implementation of the peace accord. We are ready to use all possible means to sabotage the agreement and we have the means to do it.

For the Malians, particularly for the signatories, it's a terrible message.

It's also very serious for the region. Terrorism is a threat to Mali and for the entire region. The events in Ouagadougou [Burkina Faso] in January 2016 and Grand Bassam [Côte d'Ivoire] in March 2016 showed that terrorism is spreading in the region.

The AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) is a member of the follow-up committee of the inter-Malian peace agreement. What progress has been made 18 months after the signing? Some say the peace agreement is dead,

other speak of a slow deterioration of the situation.

To answer this, let me go back to the Gao attack. Politically this is also a very serious event. In the end, the most important is not the fact of suffering such negative events or to suffer a defeat, but it is how one reacts. The important thing now is how Malians are going to handle it.

I welcomed the various statements made after the attack. President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, the CMA and the *Plateform* said this is a very serious event, but they won't be discouraged. Their message was that they are going ahead with implementing the peace accord. I hope that in the coming weeks and months they will take concrete steps to show the terrorists that they are still committed to this process.

We have to reconstitute the joint MOC patrols and make them operational as soon as possible. We also have to make sure the other joint patrols in Gao and Timbuktu are up and running, and continue with the process up to a point where all the armed movements are demobilised and integrated.

Now is the time for Malians to take other steps, some of which are in the peace agreement – and perhaps some which are not

Now is the time for Malians to take other steps, some of which are in the agreement and perhaps some which are not. This will show everyone that despite these serious events, we are determined to move ahead. There are many things in the agreement: joint patrols, interim authorities, a revision of the Constitution, etc. We have to speed up the implementation of all these aspects.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have announced that they wish to create a multinational force in the framework of the G5 Sahel, similar to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. Do you think the fight against these terror groups in the Sahel will experience a new upsurge?

As you know, there are already many forces operating in this region: In Mali we have MINUSMA [United Nations Mission for Mali], Operation Barkhane [the French anti-terrorist operation] and the Malian army. Unfortunately, this hasn't led to an improvement in the security situation. And the insecurity has persisted despite the signing of the peace agreement.

Since December 2014, the heads of state of the members of the Nouakchott process have asked for an African intervention force to strengthen MINUSMA in the fight against terrorism in northern Mali. This idea was taken up by the ministers of defence, who asked the AU Commission to study the proposal, which it did, together with the UN [United Nations], ECOWAS [Economic

18 January 2017

A MASSIVE SUICIDE ATTACK IN GAO

Community of West African States], the G5 Sahel and other actors in the region.

The idea of an intervention force for northern Mali is not new, but to date there is no consensus about implementing such a force. Neither the Peace and Security Council nor the UN Security Council has moved towards the implementation of such a force because of this lack of consensus. Now other actors are involved. At its last summit, in December 2016, ECOWAS proposed an international conference on Mali to see what can be done against the insecurity in the north of Mali.

Now Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have come together to propose a similar idea. Clearly there is an awareness among the states and regional organisations that something more should be done in Mali. That is positive.

The situation is unprecedented: we have a peacekeeping force, MINUSMA, in a context where we are trying to fight terrorism. We all know that peacekeeping forces are not meant for this. And experience on the ground shows that MINUSMA, despite having been strengthened in terms of equipment, mandate and personnel, even if this is slow in coming together, has difficulty fighting terrorism.

The idea of an intervention force for northern Mali is not new, but to date there is no consensus about implementing such a force

So this is positive, but we now have to go further and define what it is we need to do. The MNJTF against Boko Haram is a reference, but the context in northern Mali is somewhat different.

We have to define this force, its composition and command structure. We have to look for innovative new strategies to be able to face the situation in northern Mali. We can't do that with yesterday's methods.

With the presence of MINUSMA, the G5, Operation Barkhane, is there a risk that the mandates will overlap and resources be spread too thinly?

There is no risk of overlapping. The AU for now doesn't have an army. ECOWAS also doesn't have an army. So the new force, be it an AU force, an ECOWAS force or whatever other name it will be given, will be constituted by countries of the Sahel, those that are close to the theatre of operations. This will be the same as with the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The MNJTF is a reference. It was decided upon by the AU, but it is the countries of the region that are involved.

Secondly, resources are one of the key issues. That's why there is no consensus over an intervention force. But I think when it comes to

The G5 Sahel

MALI
BURKINA FASO
CHAD
NIGER
MAURITANIA

security and faced with such danger, it is difficult to say we don't have the resources. There are resources at the level of states and at the level of the international community.

When it comes to security and faced with such danger, it is difficult to say we don't have the resources

If we accept that terrorism in the Sahel is a threat, not only for the Sahel but also for the continent and beyond, we have to find the resources. I said at the Dakar summit on peace and security [in December 2016] that if we used the same means used to bomb Iraq or Syria in just one day to finance the armies of the Sahel, we will see a difference immediately. You have to make an effort to find the resources you need.

How do you coordinate the various strategies in the Sahel? Compared to the other actors, which of the activities are prioritised by MISAHEL?

There are many Sahel strategies, that's a fact. Some say there are too many. Yet it shows there is an interest in finding solutions, but these have to be coordinated. Secondly, this interest must also be sustained. We know from experience that often when there is an international crisis, people talk about it and then after a while they withdraw, but the problem persists.

For the Sahel, we created a ministerial coordination platform, chaired by a country in the region on a rotational basis. Twice a year we get together and we evaluate the situation. We set up a technical secretariat, run by UNOWA [UN Office in West Africa] and MISAHEL, to prepare the meetings. Up to now we've managed to keep the international community involved in the Sahel, in terms of security, development governance, etc.

MISAHEL's priority is security, notably promoting regional security cooperation through the Nouakchott process, which was started in 2013 to make sure all the countries fight together and optimise resources. When we started with this vision, many people didn't believe in it. I'm happy to say that we've made a lot of progress when it comes to this regional cooperation. Countries in the region have taken ownership of this regional cooperation strategy and this is where the G5 Sahel was created. The G5 Sahel was set up following discussions we had at ministerial level.

Later, when faced with Boko Haram, it was the same idea. We are no longer going to wait for external powers to get involved in security crises in the region, it must be the countries in the region that take charge. The MNJTF is a good example and has produced results.

There is also the exchange of intelligence between countries. And we've seen that this kind of cooperation works. This is, for example, how we managed to

arrest the terrorists responsible for the attack in Grand Bassam. It was thanks to the cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and other countries.

The AU has also lately promoted the idea of fighting terrorism through non-state actors. How to mobilise the civil society, women, youth, human rights organisations and parliamentarians in the fight against terrorism? We are busy hosting a series of conferences with these groups to discuss their role in the fight against terrorism.

In this regard we are trying to draw on the experience of countries like Mauritania and Algeria that have a long history of fighting terrorism.

What impact will the proposed reform of the AU Commission have on your job as the special representatives in charge of the MISAHHEL?

The issue of reforms is vast and complex. MISAHHEL is a decentralised structure of the AU. It is not exactly within the structures because it was set up as an *ad hoc* measure. My impression is that there is no clear idea at the central level of how to make the decentralised structures function optimally. For example, does MISAHHEL work with the entire AU Commission or only with the Peace and Security Department? This isn't clear and I hope this will be clarified.

My impression is that there is no clear idea at the central level of how to make the decentralised structures function optimally

Secondly, the AU is vast, so if you want to be effective on a regional level, you have to allocate resources and a clear mandate to work optimally in the region. We at MISAHHEL work at promoting security and the coordination of strategies in the region, we also do preventative diplomacy, but all of this is not really codified. We don't have the means to carry out all these activities. The fundamental reform of the AU is about resources. The big handicap today of everyone who works for the AU is we are asked to do things without being given the means to do it. So this fundamental reform concerning resources should be carried out even before reforming the structures, and it should be done as soon as possible.

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

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