

Peace & Security Council Report

MEMORIAL WALL OF OUR HEROES



PSC agenda: thematics are crowding out urgent country crises

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PSC agenda: thematics are crowding out urgent country crises

The provisional programme of work of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) for June 2026 reflects a growing trend in the PSC's monthly agenda. It contained 11 items, five of which were thematic, two country-focused and the remainder was on coordination with regional economic communities (RECs), notably through the AU-RECs mid-year coordination meeting and regional meetings with sister organs.

The April and May 2026 agendas, with four and six thematics, respectively, of 11 items, are similarly symptomatic of the longstanding trend of thematics dominating in PSC tabling. An Institute for Security Studies (ISS) study, covering January 2023 to June 2026, confirms the tendency.

An item on the PSC agenda indicates the Council's interest and intention to prioritise it

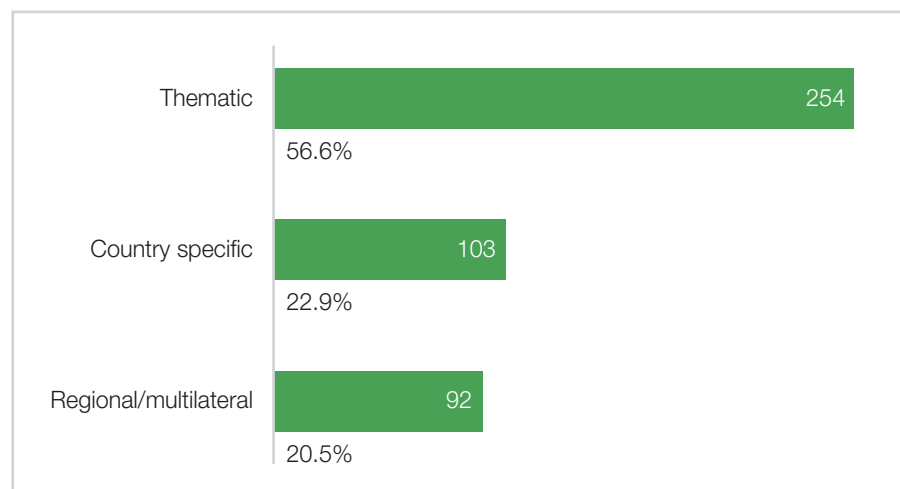
Longstanding trend

The ISS's analysis was solely on longitudinal observation of programmes of work. The analysis shows that, whether discussed or not, an item on the PSC agenda indicates the Council's interest and intention to prioritise it. The preliminary results of the study, based on descriptive statistics and a qualitative approach, indicate the PSC's growing focus on thematics. During the study period, the Council tabled 449 items, an average of nearly 11 items a month. Thematics (254 items) constituted 56.6%, while country situations accounted for only 22.9%, followed by PSC regional/multilateral engagements, which made up 20.5%.

Acronyms and abbreviations

APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture	NCCRMs	National Centres for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism
ASF	African Standby Force	PCRD	Post-conflict reconstruction and development
ATMIS	AU Transition Mission in Somalia	PSC	Peace and Security Council
AU	African Union	PSOs	Peace support operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	REC	Regional economic community
ISS	Institute for Security Studies	SSA	Stability Support Apparatus
LNA	Libyan National Army	UN	United Nations
MATD	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization	UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
MPs	Members of Parliament	WPS	Women, peace and security
		YPS	Youth, peace and security

Chart 1: Recurrence of item categories on PSC agenda January 2023 to June 2026



Source: *PSC Report* analysis of PSC programmes of work available on the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security department digital repository

The surge in thematics was also observed in the Amani Africa study, which analysed PSC's programmes of work and meeting outcomes from its inception in 2004 through the 2022 calendar year. While these were marginal on the Council's agenda at its onset, they reached a 50-50 distribution with country situations in 2019. Amani's analysis shows how country situations accounted for 90% of the PSC's first three years, leaving only 10% for thematics. Numbers of thematics rose considerably in 2021 and 2022, accounting for 56% in 2022.

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Thematic discussions have centred on three main issues – governance challenges and post-coup political transitions, PSC institutional affairs to foster coordination with AU structures such as African Peace and Security Architecture and counter-terrorism. This distribution demonstrates the PSC's efforts to address crucial issues, including unconstitutional changes of government and violent extremism, which have topped continental peace and security challenges over at least the last five years. The PSC also seeks stronger coordination among AU peace and security structures and robust working methods to discharge its mandate effectively.

The top country situations tabled involved Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Over the study period, Somalia was tabled 20 times, while Sudan and South Sudan were discussed 19 and 12 times respectively. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was considered nine times. Prolonged and grave crises in these countries justified their repeated tabling.

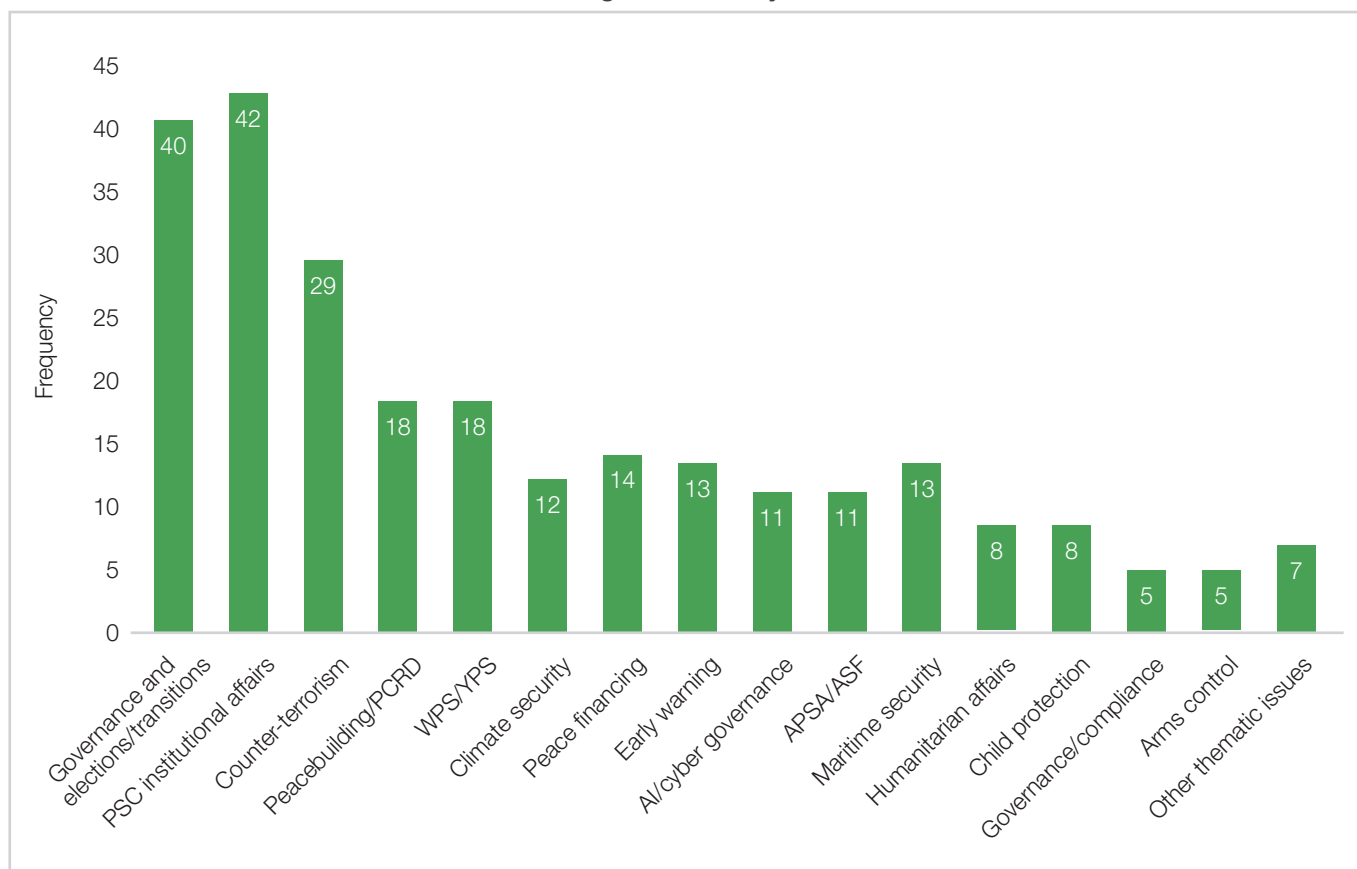
Current PSC Chairperson

H.E. Ambassador Harold Bundu Saffa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the AU and PSC Chairperson for June 2026

PSC members

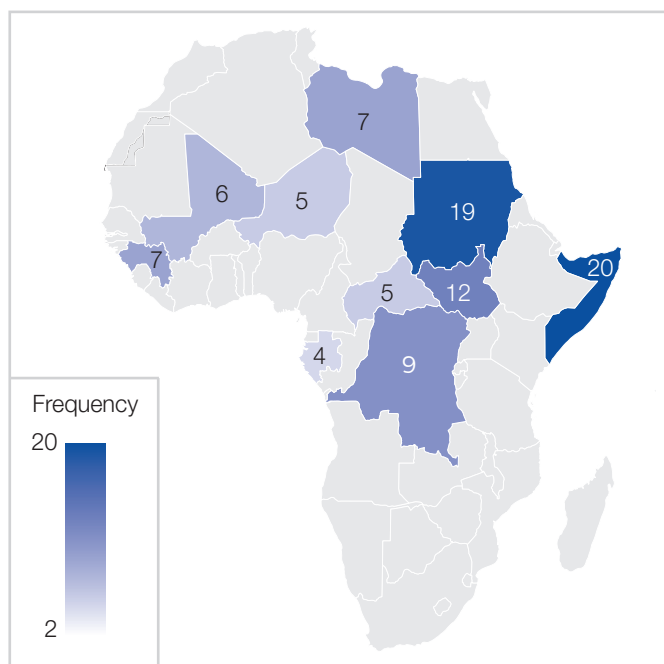
Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Lesotho, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, and Uganda

Chart 2: Recurrence of thematic items on PSC agenda January 2023 to June 2026



Data source: *PSC Report* analysis of PSC programmes of work available on the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security department digital repository

Chart 3: Recurrence of country situations on PSC agenda January 2023 to June 2026



Source: *PSC Report* analysis of PSC programmes of work available on the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security department digital repository

Reasons for thematic dominance

Three reasons explain the dominance of thematic items. The first is operational. The PSC tabling obeys a yearly provisional programme agreed on by its 15 member states, thus monthly programmes of work reflect items planned annually. These include statutory meetings with African Peace and Security Architecture pillars, supporting organs and entities such as RECs, the European Union and the United Nations. Even though chairs and the entire Council have flexibility in crafting monthly planning, the execution of the agreed-upon yearly planning remains a must.

The second is that thematic issues may be discussed at any time, whereas country situations are influenced by occurrences and the gravity of circumstances that usually prompt PSC consideration. In principle, internal peace and security remain the responsibility of member states. Some, based on the sovereignty principle enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act, oppose the PSC's consideration of their cases.

For instance, Niger President Mohamed Bazoum rejected the PSC's good offices to de-escalate the palace dispute with the current transition leader before the coup in July 2023. Similarly, Cameroon and others have felt they have the capacity to handle their crises without an official PSC tabling. Moreover, in line with the subsidiarity principle, certain country situations, such as that of Guinea Bissau, are routinely addressed by RECs.

PSC chairs' interest mostly on issues affecting their countries and regions play a huge role in crafting the monthly programmes

The third is the chairs' interest, whether regional or national. Sudan has been on the PSC agenda regularly due to its ongoing instability – at least since the 2019 coup. However, Egypt, during its recent PSC membership, showed particular interest in discussing lifting that country's AU suspension. Nigeria has prioritised counter-terrorism with other important regional and continental peace and security issues, such as maritime piracy. Thus, despite operational constraints, chairs' interest, mostly in issues affecting their countries and regions, and their influence among peers play a huge role in crafting the monthly programmes.

Improving the PSC agenda

Over two decades, the PSC has expanded its agenda to broader peace and security challenges. This demonstrates the organ's willingness to anticipate crises effectively, strengthen its prevention capacity and address the drivers of continental instability holistically. However, by doing so, generic thematics have superseded evolving and emerging country situations that require immediate attention and stronger focus. Challenges include agenda overload, especially when implementation capacity remains limited and coordination lags.

Overexpansion might not yield the desired impacts for PSC and AU member states. A targeted approach in agenda setting would help. The Council has had difficulties in tabling some obvious crises, such as Cameroon and electoral violence in Tanzania. In such conditions, sovereignty has been prioritised over non-indifference, allowing the PSC to examine crises across the continent despite their primary character as 'home affairs'.

Should AU pro-sovereignty stances persist, the agenda would be further focused on generic themes to avoid friction with uncooperative member states. Ultimately, this could affect PSC crisis anticipation and response capacity. To avoid this, the Council should coordinate further with the AU Assembly and the Permanent Representatives' Committee to sensitise member states on the value of tabling country situations. Close sessions could be proposed, especially for the most sensitive cases.



AGENDA OVERLOAD IS A CHALLENGE, ESPECIALLY WHEN CAPACITY REMAINS LIMITED AND COORDINATION LAGS

Beyond stalemate: how can the African Union remain relevant in Libya?

On 9 June 2026, the PSC held its 1 351st meeting, which discussed Libya. Chaired by Sierra Leone, with Nigeria as stand-in chair, the Council received a comprehensive briefing on the country's political, security and humanitarian developments. This came nearly a year after the landmark 1 291st PSC session of heads of state and government in July 2025. That meeting was convened following the serious clashes in Tripoli in May 2025 that had earlier been addressed at the Council's 1 280th emergency session.

Those clashes resulted in the killing of Abdel Ghani al-Kiliki, leader of the Tripoli aligned armed group – the Stability Support Apparatus (SSA) – by the 444th Brigade, a rival Tripoli-aligned armed group. It underscored the enduring influence of armed militant groups over Libya's fragile political security landscape.

Fifteen years after the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi, the AU has been notably persistent. The PSC has held at least 20 meetings on Libya since February 2011, while the AU High-Level Committee on Libya (chaired by Republic of Congo) is the AU's main vehicle for an African-led settlement. Yet Libya remains in a state of managed fragmentation: rival eastern and western power centres prevent total collapse but block meaningful national reconciliation, institutional unification and democratic transition.

Libya is one of Africa's most strategically important files. Instability fuels arms trafficking, organised crime, irregular migration, terrorism and foreign fighter movements across the Sahel and beyond. With Africa's largest oil reserves and about 150 armed groups (around 20 significant), competition over resources exacerbates the crisis.

Consolidating momentum

The communiqué of the 1 351st meeting was cautiously optimistic. The Council welcomed additional signatories to the February 2025 Charter for Peace National Reconciliation and commended the leadership of Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who chairs the high-level committee. It noted the Unified Budget Agreement of 11 April 2026 (driven largely by

the United States) and the joint military exercise held in March 2026, both viewed as modest but important confidence builders.

The PSC renewed its rejection of external interference in Libya's internal affairs and reiterated calls for withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries. It also expressed concern over continued violations of the United Nations (UN) embargo, illicit fuel exports, sporadic armed clashes and the deteriorating humanitarian conditions of African migrants in detention centres across the country. Importantly, the Council announced it would undertake a field mission to Libya and reiterated its commitment to relocating the AU liaison office to Tripoli by the end of 2027.

Rival eastern and western power centres prevent Libyan collapse but block reconciliation and transition

The meeting also brought a gradual shift in the PSC's approach. Instead of launching new initiatives, it reinforced existing commitments on national reconciliation, institution-building and implementation. It recognised that Libya's core challenge is no longer lack of agreements – at least nine major roadmaps or peace processes have been launched since 2011 – but persistent failure to implement them.

While the proposed mission and the office relocation signal greater on-the-ground engagement, neither is new. Field missions were announced (but not conducted) at the 1 244th (November 2024) and 1 291st (July 2025) meetings. Similarly, the office, established by the 297th PSC meeting in 2011 and based in Tunis, has operated in Tunisia ever since. The formal decision to relocate it was taken during the 35th AU summit (February 2022) Decision 815 and has since been repeatedly reaffirmed without progress.

Diplomatic headway

The 1 351st meeting occurred amid cautious but significant diplomatic progress. The UN Secretary-General's April 2026 report noted slow implementation

of the UN political roadmap launched in August 2025, yet the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)-facilitated structured dialogue continued to generate consensus opportunities despite east-west institutional schisms.

On 16 June 2026, Libya's three principal institutions – the High Council of State (western aligned), Presidential Council (western) and the House of Representatives (eastern) – signed the Document of Principles: Roadmap for Ending the Transitional Period. This largely Libyan-led tripartite agreement commits the parties to simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections

by 17 February 2027, established a high sovereign oversight committee and outlines steps to end the transition. Although parallel to the UN roadmap, it builds on key UNSMIL elements, including electoral framework recommendations and dialogue.

AU Commission Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf welcomed it as an encouraging step towards constitutional order and reconciliation. Conversely, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative Hanna Tetteh, in remarks two days later, did not mention the agreement by name and continued to prioritise the roadmap, noting unresolved technical and legal issues.

Chart 4: Libya peace agreements, initiatives and roadmaps

Year	Name/event	Key details/outcomes	Notes
2011	AU Roadmap	AU peace plan during the revolution/civil war: ceasefire, humanitarian aid, dialogue, transitional period and political reforms. Gaddafi accepted it, rebels largely rejected it.	AU High-Level Committee on Libya
2015	Libya's Skhirat Agreement	UN-brokered in Skhirat, Morocco. Established government of national accord, Presidency Council. Cornerstone of many later efforts, although implementation was partial.	Signed 17 December 2015
2020	Geneva Ceasefire Agreement	Permanent ceasefire between government of national accord and Khalifa Haftar-led LNA. Established 5+5 Joint Military Commission (five senior officers from each side).	October 2020, major de-escalation
2020	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum Roadmap	Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (75+ participants). Roadmap for election preparation, unified institutions and ending transition. Led to formation of government of national unity in 2021.	November 2020, elections planned for December 2021 (postponed)
2024	Brazzaville Call	AU High-Level Committee on Libya summit. Call for acceleration of peace, national reconciliation and inclusive dialogue.	5 February 2024, led by Republic of Congo
2025	National Reconciliation Charter	AU-brokered charter for peace and national reconciliation, social and political cohesion. Signed by some actors in Addis Ababa (February), later joined by others, such as the Presidential Council in January 2026.	Milestone but not fully inclusive initially. Number of signatories increasing steadily
2025	UN Political Roadmap (Hanna Tetteh/UNSMIL)	Presented August 2025. Three pillars: electoral framework for presidential/parliamentary elections, unify institutions under new government and structured dialogue on governance, economy, security and reconciliation. Target: elections in 12 to 18 months.	Ongoing, structured dialogue launched December 2025
2026 (April 11)	Unified Budget Agreement backed by the United States	First unified national budget in more than a decade (about 190 billion dinars – approximately \$30 billion USD). Signed by rival legislative bodies (House of Representatives and High State Council). Boosts financial/economic coordination.	Major practical step toward unity
2026 (June)	Document of Principles Roadmap/ tripartite agreement (Libyan-led)	Signed by House of Representatives, Presidential Council and High Council of State. Roadmap to end transition and hold presidential/parliamentary elections (target: February 2027).	Tripartite agreement, significant recent momentum

Source: PSC Report

Structural obstacles to peace

Libya has a consistent record of agreements that collapse or fall dormant at implementation. As Anas El Gomati of the Tripoli-based Sadeq Institute notes, ‘endorsement is not implementation’. The core obstacles are institutional and economic. Rival authorities east and west benefit politically and financially from maintaining parallel institutions – particularly through control of oil revenues and state resources. This creates strong incentives to preserve fragmentation rather than unify. Competing security structures, administrations, judicial bodies and financial networks are sustained by oil revenues. El Gomati posits that elections alone are unlikely to resolve the crisis without deeper reforms in institution building, public finance and the security sector.

LNA-controlled territories have reportedly served as a supply corridor for Sudan’s Rapid Support Forces

External actors add greater complexity. According to El Gomati, the United Arab Emirates has faced little consequence or attention in mediation despite being the primary external military patron of the Khalifa Haftar-aligned Libyan National Army (LNA) since 2016, specifically through the Al-Khadim Airbase. LNA-controlled territories have also reportedly served as a supply corridor for Sudan’s Rapid Support Forces. The PSC has strongly rejected (although not by name) the presence of foreign forces, mercenaries, and fighters. However, the 5+5 Joint Military Commission has acknowledged that lack of unification among security sector institutions remains a major obstacle to external force withdrawals.

In this environment, overlapping peace initiatives – UN roadmap, AU efforts and the 2026 tripartite agreement – risk duplication and forum-shopping. Greater coordination among them will be essential to turn recent diplomatic momentum into lasting impact.

Why the AU still matters

The AU has wisely refrained from launching yet another competing roadmap. However, its 2011 roadmap and subsequent high-level committee decisions have faced significant implementation challenges. These stem from a combination of external factors (foreign interference and competing mediation tracks) and internal constraints (limited follow-up capacity, resources and competing continental priorities).

Nevertheless, a clear example of the AU’s added value is the National Reconciliation Charter, facilitated by the committee. Introduced at the 38th AU summit in 2025, the charter brought together traditionally opposed power centres: the Presidential Council, High Council of State (Tripoli aligned), the House of Representatives and factions, including those linked to Gaddafi’s son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi. Although the latter’s killing in February 2026 was



THE PSC STRONGLY
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a setback, the charter has still helped bridge Libya's deep political and geographical divide and contributed to recent diplomatic momentum.

The AU is distinct in Libya's crowded mediation landscape. Unlike many actors focused narrowly on elections and institutions, it frames the crisis as both political and societal. Through the high-level committee and Brazzaville Process, it prioritises national reconciliation, transitional justice and social cohesion. The AU further reinforced its diplomatic role through the A3's collaboration with the United Kingdom (as Libya's penholder) to secure the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2819. This extended Libya's sanctions regime, a development welcomed by the PSC at its 1 351st meeting.

Opportunities for advancement

Fifteen years after Gaddafi's fall, Libya's transition remains elusive. The coming months will prove whether momentum translates into progress ahead of the planned 2027 elections. Libya, therefore, remains a significant challenge for the PSC, particularly given the United States' emphasis on the Unified Budget Agreement. As El Gomati argues, the Unified Budget Agreement risks reinforcing elite bargains that secure oil contracts and revenue flows while leaving institutional dysfunction, state capture and external patronage networks that sustain Libya's division. Unless the AU can help harmonise the implementation of existing peace initiatives, its influence on the ground may continue to wane.

Libya remains a challenge for the PSC, given the United States' emphasis on the Unified Budget Agreement

To strengthen its contribution, the PSC should:

- Champion greater harmonisation of mediation by supporting implementation of the tripartite agreement with the UN roadmap and the charter. This will reduce duplication and advance measurable institutional reunification and credible elections by end-2027.
- Expedite the field mission and relocation of the AU liaison office in Tripoli by end-2027.
- Sustain pressure for the withdrawal of foreign forces while addressing Libya-Sudan linkages.
- Expand support for local reconciliation dialogues based on AU transitional justice policies.

Ultimately, the AU's relevance will depend not on new initiatives, but on its ability to act as an effective coordinator and guarantor of implementation in a landscape dominated by powerful external players and entrenched, fragmented domestic interest.



FIFTEEN YEARS
AFTER GADDAFI'S FALL,
LIBYA'S TRANSITION
REMAINS ELUSIVE

Strengthening the safety and security of AU peacekeepers

International Day of UN Peacekeepers on 29 May recognises outstanding service and honours fallen heroes. This year, the AU commemorated the day with the UN and other organisations, remembering African peacekeepers who risk their lives in AU-led peace support operations (PSOs). Yet the AU has no consistent way of honouring its peacekeepers, despite the grave risks they face. What measures should be taken to reduce fatalities and strengthen the safety and security of PSO personnel?

Peacekeeping can be deadly

Peacekeeping is high risk. Since 1948, the UN has deployed more than two million soldiers, police and civilians in 71 operations, about half in Africa. Since the first mission, nearly 4 500 peacekeepers have lost their lives and many others have been injured. Currently, more than 50 000 peacekeepers are serving in 11 UN peacekeeping operations worldwide, five in Africa.

The AU's role in peacekeeping has increased over the past two decades. As Africa's conflict landscape has changed, the AU and its regional economic communities and mechanisms have played a greater role in preventing, managing and resolving continental conflict. The AU has deployed hundreds of thousands of soldiers, police and civilians to about 22 PSOs, including in Burundi, Sudan, Comoros, Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia.

Data suggest that casualties are high among AU PSOs compared to those of UN missions, particularly in Sudan and Somalia. Some reports indicate that about 59 personnel were killed in Sudan between 2004 and 2007 and roughly 3 500 in Somalia since 2007.

An AU official at a closed Institute for Security Studies briefing recently estimated that deaths in Somalia were closer to 8 000. If accurate, this exceeds the number of UN operation deaths for the past 78 years.

Data gaps on fatalities

Fatalities are high in AU PSOs due to the volatile and asymmetric nature of current conflicts in Africa, marked by terrorism and organised insurgencies. But despite the extreme risks, the AU, unlike the UN, has never

publicly released data on the number of peacekeepers killed in PSOs, raising concerns about transparency and accountability.

The need has never been greater for the AU to honour peacekeepers' service and sacrifice. While UN deployments have plummeted – with no new operations since 2014 – peace operations and collective security in Africa are required now more than ever. Although maintaining international peace is the UN's primary responsibility, the AU has shared the burden through the deployment of PSOs.

An AU official recently estimated that deaths in Somalia were close to 8 000

According to Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, Africa has the highest number of conflicts globally. In 2025, the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme recorded 28 active state-based armed conflicts in Africa, up from 14 a decade ago. Despite this, the AU has no policy nor practice to recognise its peacekeepers. In 2019, a memorial wall with a list of names of those killed on duty was inaugurated at the Julius Nyerere Peace and Security Building of the AU headquarters on Africa Day, 25 May. Although this is an important symbol and provides some recognition, commemoration since has been insufficient. This, combined with a lack of transparency and accountability and a limited compensation scheme, lowers PSO personnel morale.

Honouring peacekeepers

The AU PSC should honour the services of peacekeepers regularly and institute policy frameworks that strengthen their safety and security. Three areas require attention. First, lack of public data on PSO fatalities must be rectified. In 2015, *PSC Report* noted that missions were 'not allowed to release specific casualty counts'. Instead, they delegated the responsibility to countries contributing peacekeepers. The AU should review the practice if it still applies, given how non-recognition undermines morale.

Secondly, peacekeepers injured during deployment deserve fair compensation, as do the families of

those killed. UN General Assembly Resolution 64/269 of 2010 states that compensation for the death of all categories of UN uniformed peacekeepers is US\$70 000. Anonymous AU sources told *PSC Report* that the AU pays about US\$50 000 maximum for death, injury and missing-in-action peacekeepers.

However, according to a former special representative of the AU Commission chairperson and head of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), Mohamed El-Amine Souef, some families have not received proper compensation due to funding constraints.

Thirdly, given the high PSO fatality rate, assessing personnel safety and security systems is imperative. The hostile operating environment may not be the only cause for their extreme vulnerability – inadequate preparation for a hostile, kinetic and asymmetric active warzone is another likely factor. Souef says troops were not well prepared for Somalia, which points to possible gaps in recruitment, training and equipment.

After al-Shabaab attacked Ugandan ATMIS troops in 2023, killing at least 54, Uganda initiated an inquiry into army corruption. President Yoweri Museveni maintained in a speech on 1 June 2023 that the Ugandan soldiers were not ready for combat because of corruption.

This reveals another policy gap. There is no public record of an AU guide for member states on the safety of PSO peacekeepers. Their protection has also not received the PSC's dedicated attention. Although the Council has discussed the performance, mandate renewals and financing of PSOs – and pays tribute to their personnel – no decisions have been made public on how to keep them safe.

A guide to protecting peacekeepers

Assessing personnel safety systems is imperative. Peacekeeper safety is a UN priority. UN Secretary-General António Guterres's 29 May message was clear: 'The UN continues to strengthen protective measures to mitigate threats and enable them [UN peacekeepers] to carry out their mandates safely.' On 23 June 2026, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2823 to facilitate the identification, investigation and prosecution of those targeting UN peacekeeping personnel.

The AU should follow suit, prioritising safety and security and revisiting or drafting new policies on non-disclosure of PSO casualties, safety measures during operations and compensation. Dedicated PSC briefing sessions are needed to hold PSO leaders and commanders accountable for failures leading to casualties. Essential is a system for mental health and psychological support to address trauma.

Honouring AU peacekeepers could be meaningful if the organisation regularly and publicly recognised their service and sacrifice, compensated families and strengthened field safety and security systems. Investment must be made in training, leadership, logistics, policy and procedures, reporting, accountability and oversight.

THE AU PAYS
PEACEKEEPERS ROUGHLY

US\$50 000

FOR DEATH OR INJURY,
FAR BELOW THE UN'S

US\$70 000

Will Guinea's May elections bring stability?

On 31 May, 6.8 million citizens voted to choose their Members of Parliament (MPs) and municipal councillors in Guinea's legislative and local elections. The polls are part of the ongoing process of returning to constitutional order, following the December 2025 presidential election won by President Mamady Doumbouya with 86.72% of the vote.

After Guinea's 2021 coup, a transition timetable was agreed with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2022. But although the country has made institutional and political progress in a region facing a crisis of democracy, the elections remain controversial.

On the positive side, this month's polls mark the implementation of the bicameral system introduced following the 2025 constitutional referendum. The new 87-member Senate, together with the National Assembly, aims to better represent Guinea's regions and promote dialogue, national unity and the preservation of Guinean customs and traditions.

Two-thirds of senators will be elected by regional and municipal councillors, and the remaining third by the president. The creation of a Senate has been criticised as a way of maintaining political patronage. It could also lead to longer administrative delays, increased financial costs associated with running two chambers, and risks of institutional deadlock.

The National Assembly – whose legislative function has been carried out by a non-elected National Transitional Council during the transition – will comprise 147 MPs, up from 114 previously. One-third will be elected through proportional representation on a national list, and the remaining two-thirds through a single-round majority vote in single-member or multi-member constituencies.

Successful elections on 31 May should restore legitimacy to local authorities. Since the dissolution of municipal councils in 2024, special delegations appointed by the government have replaced municipal councillors elected in 2018.

The local elections are proving highly contested, with inter- and intra-party rivalries surrounding candidate lists. In theory, these polls should strengthen citizen participation in local governance because the September 2025 referendum decided that independent

candidates can now stand. But true citizen participation will require sufficient resources and an effective decentralisation policy.

The polls also reflect a desire to promote women's effective participation in the electoral process. The constitution establishes the promotion of gender parity by requiring that women occupy at least 30% of elected positions in national, regional and local decision making.

In line with this, the electoral code says candidate lists for municipal and legislative elections must include at least 30% women, arranged in a zebra system, with alternating male and female names. For these elections, the representation of female candidates has reached 31% on the majoritarian legislative lists and 29% on the local election lists.

While all these advances are noteworthy, several obstacles remain that could undermine the credibility of the elections and the country's democratic trajectory.

Guinea's elections mark real institutional progress, but credibility concerns overshadow the gains

There are doubts about the impartiality of the electoral management process because – as with the September 2025 referendum and December 2025 presidential polls – the General Directorate of Elections in the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD) is responsible for organising this month's vote.

The rejection of several opposition party lists and approval of those in the presidential coalition gathered around the Generation for Modernisation and Development movement reinforces these doubts. In some cases, the accepted and rejected lists exhibited the same deficiencies.

Equally controversial is the validation of candidacies from the National Transitional Council, as well as former ministers of the transition. While the constitution does not explicitly exclude them, the transitional charter prohibits all current MPs and members of the transitional government from standing in elections that end the transition.

Another problem is that the 31 May elections exclude the parties that shaped Guinea's political history. In March, 40 political parties were dissolved following an MATD-led evaluation process. Among them were those of former presidents Alpha Condé, Lansana Conté and Ahmed Sékou Touré (independence leader), and past prime ministers Cellou Dalein Diallo and Sidya Touré.

This decision marked the beginning of a reconfiguration of Guinea's political landscape, as evidenced by the emergence of new political forces. These include the Generation for Modernisation and Development movement and more modest political groups that have strengthened their support base, like the Democratic Front of Guinea.

Only inclusive governance of all key stakeholders can guarantee Guinea's long-term stability

This dynamic is fuelling fears of a return to a one-party system, contrary to the principle of political pluralism established in 1991 when the shift towards democracy started. It is likely to affect the composition of municipal councils and Parliament, raising the risk of one-sided political institutions, weak checks and balances and the deterioration of democratic quality.

The dissolution of long-standing opposition parties comes amid criticism of the authorities over the shrinking of civic and political space. This stems from the banning of protests, recurring abductions and disappearances of dissenting voices and their relatives, and the closure and control of media outlets.

The 31 May elections are a vital part of the transition. Unlike other post-coup regimes in the region, Guinea's administration has demonstrated a genuine willingness to return to constitutional order by organising elections. But the context in which polls are being held could undermine the country's democratic gains – reinforcing the point that elections cannot be considered an end in themselves.

The only guarantee of stability is socio-political and institutional reform that enables citizens' views to be heard and allows all key stakeholders in the country to participate in public governance.

In this regard, the African Union, ECOWAS, and African transition support mechanisms should play a more active role in monitoring, political support, and advocacy with the Guinean authorities to ensure adherence to the democratic commitments made as part of the transition.

In particular, they could work toward expanding civic space. This would notably involve releasing political prisoners, facilitating the return of exiles (including journalists, civil society activists, and political figures), and guaranteeing civil liberties.

In line with the latest African Union guidelines, these efforts would contribute to the broader goals of consolidating democracy, promoting inclusive governance, and fostering national cohesion.

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DISSOLVED PARTIES AND
A GOVERNMENT-RUN
ELECTORAL BODY
CAST DOUBT ON THE
POLLS' CREDIBILITY

ECOWAS reinforces early warning frameworks amid integrated security threats

As multiple factors converge to create a complex human security situation, early warning has never been more important. Dr Onyinye Onwuka, Acting Director of the Early Warning Directorate at ECOWAS, spoke to *PSC Report*.

With West African security and politics becoming increasingly complex and volatile, how has the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate adapted its analytical frameworks and methodologies to improve forecasting?

The directorate operates in an environment where security risks are no longer isolated. Political, economic, social and environmental factors interact to create an integrated human security threat, and our early warning framework has evolved with it.

First, we have deepened our multidimensional human security risk analysis. We used to focus primarily on risks affecting individual member states, but since insecurity knows no boundaries, we expanded more than a decade ago from a single-country focus to thematic analysis with regional implications.

The directorate now monitors threats in a more integrated way, covering security, governance, human rights, the environment, crime and criminality, and health and pandemics – which have killed more people than traditional warfare. We also monitor food security, social cohesion and organised crime across member states.

The second adaptation is data triangulation, using the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network of field monitors and national reports. We cannot see everything alone, so we combine these field reports with data from Africa Media Monitor, a digital application that automates data gathering from more than 1 000 global online sources, and with social media monitoring and analysis. Data triangulation is key to the credibility of our analysis.

Third, we have moved from monitoring to a predictive analytical framework, where scenario-based forecasting identifies crises and their potential triggers.

Fourth, we have pursued greater localisation through the ECOWAS-designed national centres for the coordination of the response mechanism. These centres work with

local partners to gather community information on conflict dynamics, recognising that many regional crises emerge from local grievances before they escalate.

Given the transnational nature of these threats, our analytical frameworks increasingly focus on regional spillovers. West Africa is divided into four clusters – the Gulf of Guinea, the Sahel, the Mano River and Senegambia – and we monitor cross-border risk through our risk and vulnerability assessment programmes. We are also developing an ECOWAS human security index with partners, civil society and our centres of excellence, to ensure it is credible, acceptable and suited to the region. Several workshops have been held, and we are confident of finalising the index by the end of 2026.

How have the national response mechanism centres strengthened early warning and response capacities nationally and regionally, and what improvements are needed?

The establishment of the National Centres for the Coordination of the Response Mechanism (NCCRMs) was one of ECOWAS early warning's high points. On 14 July 2014, at its 45th ordinary session in Accra, ECOWAS heads of state adopted the Policy Framework for the Establishment of National Early Warning and Rapid Response Mechanisms in all member states. This was an important institutional innovation because it sought to bridge the gap between regional and national early warning systems. We added national response because alerts are of little use if the response capacity resides elsewhere.

We currently have eight functional national centres. Three countries have since left ECOWAS, so we have lost those centres and have fewer formal information-sharing channels, particularly from the Sahel. We are expanding partnerships with civil society, think tanks, local monitoring networks and the African Union to



Dr Onyinye Onwuka

access and analyse information from that region, and are establishing national centres in the remaining ECOWAS member states where they are still absent.

These centres have achieved much: member states now have designated mechanisms to receive, validate and act on early warnings, early warning is more embedded in government decision-making, and information flow has improved. The centres have also strengthened communication among local communities, national authorities and the ECOWAS Commission.

Reporting on local conflicts, electoral tensions and security incidents has also improved significantly, and will continue to as we work with partners and governments. The centres collect and analyse local data and issue national alerts and recommendations. This data – which helps coordinate national responses while supporting regional preventive diplomacy – is also transmitted to the ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate to feed into regional conflict analysis.

Coordination has also been enhanced, as the centres facilitate cooperation among national ministries. Different sectoral ministries sit on the statutory board, and staff seconded to the centres exchange views on interconnected human security issues.

Finally, the centres strongly support conflict prevention and local conflict management. Gaps remain – not all member-state centres are at the same level – and this is a work in progress. Conflict is visible, even at the level of structural and root causes, but peace is harder to measure. These structures will nonetheless help bring peace to the region, and ECOWAS will continue to guide, train and provide technical assistance to ensure national architectures function and their benefits are visible.

Early warning systems do not always translate into timely and effective action – what is being done to resolve this?

We need to place more emphasis on prevention than on reaction, but there is often reluctance to act on warnings that carry a political cost. Governments sometimes perceive a warning as criticism rather than an opportunity for prevention. I always say early warning is not early condemnation – it is knowledge of what is impending, so that we can act to stop it together.

Resources are also a constraint. National centres report a lack of dedicated funding for operations, and funding has become a broader global challenge as other priorities take precedence. As a result, preventive action competes with more immediate demands – even though prevention is a long-term but essential engagement. Institutional fragmentation also slows response, as responsibilities are spread across multiple agencies, complicating coordination over who receives the resources to respond.

Finally, sovereignty is a concern. Regional recommendations sometimes meet resistance from national authorities, who tend to push back on comments outlining issues in their country during regional meetings. Government officials naturally defend their governments, but we want them to also see that human security is everyone's responsibility.

What has the Inter-regional Knowledge Exchange on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention achieved in its four years?

It has strengthened collaboration among continental and regional early warning mechanisms. We partner with the African Union on Africa Media Monitor and on periodic training to harmonise conflict prevention tools and outcomes. The knowledge exchange has gone further still, building exchanges on methodology, analytical tools, peer learning and, most importantly, lessons learnt.

The learning has been symbiotic. Our experience has sharpened the analytical approaches of other regional economic communities and broadened the lenses through which we view issues ourselves. This has enhanced the integration of regional findings, creating greater opportunities for joint assessment, joint reports and coordinated preventive diplomacy.

About the PSC Report

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

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

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