Peace & Security Council Report

Africa needs a continental strategy on foreign terrorist fighters

Following the defeat of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, many African terrorist fighters are now returning home. Although numbers are difficult to verify, they could pose a serious risk to peace and security in Africa.

The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) in a meeting in 2018 expressed 'deep concern over the growing influx of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) from outside the continent and the threat they are increasingly posing to peace and security in Africa'.

This is an evolving transnational threat for which a continental strategy and response by the AU must become a priority, in addition to action taken by member states.

It is important that policymakers grasp the extent of the phenomenon, develop appropriate policy frameworks and design strategies to address the issue in collaboration with regional economic communities (RECs), AU specialised bodies working on the prevention and countering of terrorism, and local communities.

The impact of past returnees

The return of terrorist fighters is nothing new in Africa. Many, especially from North Africa, joined the jihad against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, alongside al-Qaeda. The 1990s saw the return of these fighters mostly to Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Libya and Sudan.

Some of these returnees, such as Mokhtar Belmokhtar of Algeria and Ahmed Rafiki (Abou Houdeyfa) of Morocco, created affiliate terrorist organisations in their respective countries, intent on overthrowing governments. Both men were also engaged in elaborate transnational criminal networks that smuggled goods, natural resources, people and drugs, and engaged in kidnapping for ransom.

Their criminal activities financed terrorism across the Sahel region, including in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia.

Multiple dimensions of an evolving threat

More recently, according to a report by The Soufan Group, almost as many African fighters as those from the Middle East joined Daesh in Syria and Iraq. Many of them are from the Maghreb region and around 6 000 from Tunisia alone.

Those returnees who were forced to leave the group through defeat in battle and others who voluntarily left Syria and Iraq to set up affiliates elsewhere in Africa present the greatest threat.

Current PSC Chairperson

His Excellency Robert Y Lormia, ambassador to Ethiopia and permanent representative of Liberia to the African Union.

PSC members

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

The Combating Terrorism Center estimates that in mid-2018, by which time most returnees had reached their destinations in Africa, the total number of fighters in Daesh-affiliated groups on the continent were around 6 050.

While their numbers are small, their geographical reach is significant. Countries as far removed from Daesh strongholds in Syria and Iraq as South Africa saw their citizens travel to join Daesh. Their return could thus spread the threat of terrorism across Africa – even to places hitherto alien to their activities.

A multi-faceted threat

Returnees pose various potential threats, with some believed to have the basic field experience to plan and manage terror attacks while others may also have the ability to give training in handling sophisticated artillery and in manufacturing in-house explosives and other weapons.

> Countries as far removed from Daesh strongholds in Syria and Iraq as South Africa saw their citizens join Daesh

Many returnees also have a network of affiliates across the world, simplifying the transfer of supplies and the logistics of executing and financing their terror operations. This means they get support for their social media campaigns and by broadcasting their

terror attacks. As a node in a global network, they may also act as entry points and facilitators for terror groups in countries that traditionally have not been terrorist strongholds.

Returnees may also go to other conflict zones upon their return, further destabilising conflict regions. For example, many returnees from Syria and Iraq went to Libya and the Sahel region to join existing affiliate terrorist cells.

The potential threat posed by unaffiliated terrorist fighters cannot be overstated, as Daesh has called upon supporters to wage attacks wherever and whenever possible. Such uncoordinated and unsupervised terror tactics mean that lone terrorists can carry out attacks anytime and anywhere. It is more difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace and apprehend individuals, making them more versatile in carrying out attacks.

Finally, returnees from Daesh-held territories are perceived to have had first-hand experience in what a successful terror group should emulate. Thus, they act as mentors to aspirants, encouraging further radicalisation and violence.

Support to home-grown terror groups

The proliferation of home-grown terrorist groups in Africa that have pledged allegiance to Daesh is clearly a major threat to peace on the continent. Numbers vary across different studies and are difficult to verify. Estimates provided by the Combating Terrorism Center can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Estimated numbers of Islamic State fighters in various African cells (July 2018)
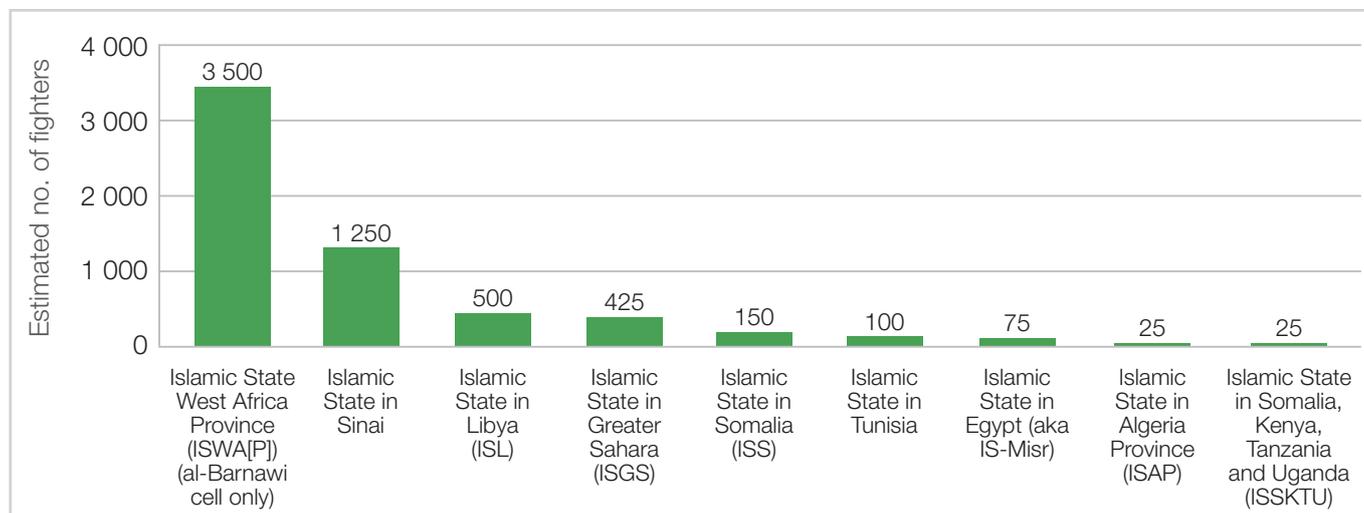
Source: Combating Terrorism Center

When returnees join such affiliate groups, they help create a stronger network and greater coordination among terrorist groups across the continent. Their affiliation also means they take on Daesh's brand of brutal terror tactics.

Recent claims by terror groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique tend to confirm these fears. Experts, however, have questioned such direct links with Daesh, especially in Mozambique.

According to a report to the United Nations (UN) Security Council in April 2019, as well as an AU PSC communiqué from November 2018, such 'under-radar' countries as Benin, Togo and other coastal states in West Africa have become terrorist incubators, with the noted presence of returnees.

There are indications that this is further complicated by the number of terrorist organisations in Africa that are linked to or directly involved in other forms of transnational crimes such as human and drugs trafficking, trafficking in small arms and light weapons, money laundering and illegal transfer of funds. Terrorist organisations, especially those affiliated with Daesh, also have the potential to exacerbate natural resource-financed conflicts, as witnessed in Libya.

The potential to use chemical agents and biological weapons has also emerged as a terror threat in Africa. The Kenyan government thwarted a potential anthrax attack by a group affiliated with Daesh in 2016.

The ideological nature of a caliphate, advocated by Daesh sympathisers, is incompatible with the global system of nation-states, which means they pose a threat to all governments and states on the continent.

Continental response to a complex threat

The AU has developed several legal and policy frameworks for preventing and countering terrorism since 1999. Despite these provisions there has been a rise in the terrorist threat in Africa. The return of terrorist fighters compounds this threat.

Recognising this, in 2018 the PSC asked the AU Commission to 'urgently compile a continental list composed of a database of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts, including FTFs' in collaboration with the AU Mechanism for Police

Cooperation, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

However, the list is not forthcoming, as many of these entities either lack the capacity to implement their mandates or encounter information-sharing gaps. At the heart of the problem is how well member states can coordinate and collaborate in sharing sensitive information from their intelligence agencies.

Although member states in the Lake Chad Basin, and others such as Morocco, Kenya and Sudan, have developed processes for the rehabilitation, reintegration or prosecution of returnees from within and outside of Africa, the continent lacks a comprehensive framework that guides the extradition and/or prosecution of returnees deemed a security threat.

> Terrorist organisations have the potential to exacerbate natural resource-financed conflicts, as witnessed in Libya

In order to enable member states to more effectively respond to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, the AU should enact appropriate policy frameworks that adopt the UN's Madrid Guiding Principles (2015) and the 2017 UN Security Council Resolution (2396) on how to respond to such challenges.

A compilation of lessons learned from member states that have experience in successfully responding to the threat posed by the return of foreign terrorist fighters can assist the development of such policy frameworks. For example, Algeria has managed to employ a diverse and multifaceted response in dealing with returnees, including counter-terror measures as well as negotiation and national reconciliation processes.

Such lessons learned from across the continent should inform the development of AU policy frameworks meant to respond to the return of terrorist fighters.

The AU should closely work with RECs, regional mechanisms, member states and local communities if it is to successfully implement such policy frameworks.

The internationalisation of the Libyan war

The Libyan conflict is currently experiencing its most serious escalation since the civil war started in 2014. Since April 2019, the Libyan National Army (LNA) under Khalifa Haftar has been engaged in an offensive against the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli.

Haftar's latest offensive on Tripoli is said to have been spurred on by foreign powers that gave him the military support he needed to seek control of the capital. External actors with competing geopolitical and economic interests are heavily involved in the conflict. In addition to providing finances and the 'illegal supply of arms, ammunitions and related technologies to the factions', foreign involvement is creating a context for a proxy war.

Libya is currently both a transit route and a destination for arms trafficking, counterfeit products, drugs and migrant smuggling by organised criminal networks, armed militias and terrorist groups. The Libyan civil war, exacerbated by external interference, thus has dangerous implications for the entire region's peace and stability.

AU and UN peace efforts

Apart from security implications, the LNA's current offensive is affecting ongoing peace efforts for the country. Both a UN National Conference scheduled for April and an AU reconciliation conference scheduled for July this year couldn't happen as planned.

Both conferences had aimed to bring together Libyan stakeholders to resolve their differences regarding the 2015 Libyan Political Agreement, and pave the way for elections and a constitutional referendum by the end of 2019. Among other things, the latest offensive signals a breakdown of the 2015 peace agreement, which although contested, is the only viable political process for resolving Libya's crisis.

Meanwhile, efforts by the PSC and the UN Security Council's (UNSC) African non-permanent member states to get a joint UN–AU envoy for Libya have again been thwarted.

The joint envoy was proposed by the PSC, which met at the ministerial level on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September. A joint UN–AU envoy for Libya could help combine all Libya's peace processes under one initiative.

The PSC and UNSC also discussed the Libya situation during their Annual Joint Consultative Meeting on 23 October in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The rejection of the planned special envoy, however, remains a sticking point.

The AU could provide the legitimacy needed for an international multilateral peace process, which is marred by the history of international involvement in the overthrow and death of the country's former leader, Muammar Gaddafi, based on a stretched interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973.

External involvement

Military involvement of the West (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which led to the downfall of the Libyan government in 2011, marked the beginning of foreign intervention in Libya.

> The AU could provide the legitimacy needed for an international multilateral peace process

Although this multi-state military intervention officially ended with Gaddafi's death, several countries continue to be involved in Libya's crisis. This is due to competition for access to the country's oil resources and ports in the Mediterranean, supporting the war against various terrorist groups, European efforts to control the use of Libya as a migrant route and regional geostrategic competition among Gulf powers. Neighbouring countries with security interests in Libya are also involved.

The repercussions

External involvement, especially through military support, may be prolonging Libya's civil war, as it encourages warring factions to opt for a zero-sum military victory

rather than a negotiated end. As a result, Libya faces a complex and protracted humanitarian crisis and an inability to protect its people.

Foreign support to the different warring tribal groups and militia has the potential to permanently split the country into two or more regions by widening political polarisation and further fraying the country's social fabric.

It has also directly contributed to the proliferation of arms, despite a UN arms embargo on the country. According to UN envoy for Libya Ghassan Salamé, 'Libya has become a terrain of experimentation of new military technologies and recycling of old weapons.' He says various types of weaponry have been 'transferred to Libya with the complicity and indeed outright support of foreign governments'.

> **Foreign support to the different warring tribal groups and militia has the potential to permanently split the country**

Such transfers have enabled terrorist groups and various criminal networks to wage war and engage in cross-border criminal activities across porous borders, undermining the peace and security of the whole region.

The dependence of foreign powers on various semi-independent militias to protect their interests in Libya, including counter-terrorism operations, the protection of oil fields and containing other factions, has also enhanced the capacity of armed militias. These factions now seem to prefer maintaining the status quo to a peaceful resolution.

External interference also perpetuates the perception among AU member states that the AU has been sidelined from the Libyan peace process due to differences in its approach to that of UNSC members, who have a direct stake in the Libyan conflict.

While some key UN and Arab League member states officially support and participate in international efforts to end the conflict, their support to militias directly undermines proposed multilateral peace processes initiated by the UN and AU. These countries have also initiated parallel peace processes that have been unable to achieve a breakthrough. These disjointed processes weaken the synergy of action in Libya, which the AU has been calling for.

Stabilising Libya

Both the AU and UN have reiterated that a military outcome is unlikely to bring about lasting peace and stability in Libya, which is divided along regional, linguistic and tribal lines. A countrywide consultative and inclusive peace process is the only way a government that is legitimate in the eyes of all stakeholders can be established.

However, any prospect for a ceasefire in Libya is grim given the level of political and military interference from external powers. Ongoing efforts between the PSC and UNSC should aim at consolidating a roadmap for responding to external interference in Libya, and bringing the different factions together.

A tortuous road for the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

Earlier this month, a Constitutional Term Limits Summit was held in Niamey, Niger, to discuss the issue of constitutional amendments through which many African heads of states have sought to extend their rule. The summit was hosted by Niger's outgoing president Mahamadou Issoufou.

Constitutional amendments pose a serious problem for peaceful transitions of power in Africa, even though this principle is enshrined in the AU African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Adopted in January 2007, the charter is the AU's policy to promote and cement democracy, free and fair and transparent elections, as well as good governance on the continent. It came into force in February 2012.

As the AU prepares to observe a number of elections before the end of the year – notably in Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, and as authorities in Guinea are seeking to amend the constitution to allow 82-year-old Alpha Condé to run for a third term – the principles of the charter will again be put to the test.

> The rationale for the charter was to contribute to the revitalisation and consolidation of democratic structures

The charter is a comprehensive policy document that covers a wide range of areas, including 'democracy and respect for human rights; rule of law premised on the supremacy of the constitution; the holding of democratic and credible elections; prohibition and rejection of unconstitutional changes of government; promotion and protection of the independence of the judiciary; sustainable development and human security; fostering citizen participation; transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs'.

Thirty-four countries have so far ratified the charter, 15 have signed but not ratified, and six have not signed. After the push for democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the continent experienced some setbacks that hindered the establishment of burgeoning democratic institutions and a nascent democratic culture in post-independence Africa. The rationale for the charter was

to contribute to the revitalisation and consolidation of democratic structures and accompanying practices.

Although the number of ratifications and signatures is commendable, the charter still faces numerous challenges, not least of which are the implementation and domestication of its principles by those countries.

States that have ratified are also required to submit a biennial report on the measures taken to implement the charter from the day it came into force for them. Since 2012, only two reports have been submitted – Togo and Rwanda who ratified the charter in March 2012 and July 2010, respectively. Ghana who ratified the charter in October 2010, is said to be in the process of submitting its report.

While the charter is not a panacea for solving all the continent's democratic ills, it is part of the solution to the many governance problems that create conflict and instability in Africa. It is therefore important to continue encouraging its ratification, domestication and implementation.

What are the challenges?

The main stumbling block for states when it comes to ratification, or domestication or implementation, is their commitment to take the necessary steps to effect the changes needed.

Other factors impeding ratification by the 15 signatory states could be circumstantial or structural. A state may have signed the charter in particular circumstances, but didn't follow up with ratification simply because the national institutions in charge of taking the next steps failed to do so. This could be because it isn't a priority for those authorities.

So while a state's president may have signed the charter during an AU meeting, the ratification may involve various ministerial departments and parliament,

with one of the entities having to take the lead and involve all national stakeholders in the process.

Ratification of the charter typically requires – after commitment from the highest authorities – all key government and non-governmental stakeholders to work together during this process. Non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations can also push government to follow through with ratification. However this can only happen where political space is available for these organisations to operate.

Getting this process right – top-down or bottom-up, or both – is particularly important as the challenges to ratification also apply to the charter's implementation and domestication.

Ratifying states also need to take adequate measures to align their national institutions and mechanisms to the principles enshrined in the charter. This means that, ideally, all stakeholders must again partake in a process that weaves or reweaves as inclusive and broad a 'social contract' among people as possible. States are often cautious about the cost – financial and more importantly political – of making such institutional changes. This may largely explain why ratifying states haven't complied with their reporting obligations.

While for many countries national legislation might be on par with the charter's principles, the next step of its implementation and domestication becomes the real test. This is a process that demands commitment from all stakeholders, and because each country will be different, it is important that states report back.

Convoluted views and aspirations about democracy

Although most AU member states have signed and ratified the charter, there seems to be a gap between this and what they believe and practise. Democracy continues to be subverted in many ways, and it's crucial to keep strengthening democratic institutions.

Debates around democracy in Africa have tended to emphasise the fact that democracy is not perfect anywhere in the world, that the continent cannot duplicate a democratic model that doesn't fit its realities. The conclusion is that Africa needs its very own brand of democracy.

While pointing out the flaws of the liberal democratic model is understandable, this way of framing the discussion raises questions. First, are the charter's principles not 'African' enough? This could constitute perhaps the biggest challenge to the charter – a dissonance between its values and an ideological or philosophical detachment from them by those translating the charter's vision into action. Second, what would an 'African democratic model' look like? Is it about democratic values or is it about how those are turned into democratic institutions and practices, or even a democratic 'culture'?

Answers to these questions can help refocus the debate about what democracy should be like on the continent, and how it can benefit the people of Africa.

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COUNTRIES RATIFIED THE CHARTER

Guinea-Bissau: a presidential election to end the political crisis?

On 24 November Guinea-Bissau is holding an all-important presidential election that could finally bring to an end the institutional crisis that has been plaguing the country since August 2015. The election is taking place eight months after the legislative polls, which were widely perceived as a means of clarifying the political balance of power.

The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) emerged as the winner of the legislative elections with a relative majority of 47 out of 102 members sitting in parliament – the National People's Congress (ANP). It formed a parliamentary alliance with its traditional allies, the United People's Assembly–Guinea-Bissau Democratic Party (APU-PDGB), which entered the ANP for the first time with five representatives, as well as the Union for Change (UM) and the Party for a New Democracy (PND), both winning one seat. This alliance allowed the PAIGC to secure the 54-seat majority necessary to choose the prime minister and form the government.

> On 24 November Guinea-Bissau is holding presidential elections that could bring to an end the institutional crisis

However, the March elections did not help to alleviate the situation, given the deep antagonism bedevilling the political arena. First the nomination of the ANP members was delayed. Then the appointment of the prime minister was postponed, with President José Mario Vaz refusing to appoint Domingos Simoes Pereira. This resulted in further delays in forming the new government. Aristides Gomes was finally appointed prime minister instead of Pereira thanks to the mediation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the support of the international community.

As the presidential election draws near, the political situation remains precarious. The electoral process divides the political class. Moreover, the disagreements between the main political actors and their supporters within civil society and the army may further undermine ongoing stabilisation efforts before, during and after the elections.

Crisis protagonists are ideally positioned

Guinea-Bissau is engaged in an electoral process that transcends the normal framework of an election. The process yet again sets the main actors of the 2015 crisis against each other. With this election, not only are they putting at risk their political future but, if they loose, they also risk prosecution for any economic crimes they may have committed. These actors include four key candidates supported by parties or movements that emerged from within the PAIGC.

Pereira, the PAIGC candidate, is up against Umaro Sissoco Embalo (MADEM-G15), Vaz (independent) and Carlos Gomes Junior (independent). Pereira's candidacy comes against the backdrop of Vaz's earlier refusal to appoint him as prime minister. It is for this reason that some commentators regard this election as motivated by revenge tactics rather than pure electioneering.

As the frontrunner in these elections, Pereira's PAIGC will have to fend off the MADEM-G15, which was created by dissident PAIGC MPs who challenged his leadership. It brings together former party officials who have sufficient mobilisation capacity and financial resources to run an effective electoral campaign.

Gomes Junior, known as Cadogo, is also expected to gnaw at the PAIGC's electoral base. Cadogo is a former president of the PAIGC and a former prime minister. He is back on the political stage after seven years in exile following the coup d'état of April 2012, which halted the electoral process. In spite of retaining some level of support and popularity both within and outside the party, he has failed to gain the backing of either the PAIGC or any other major political party. This shortcoming, which he shares with outgoing president Vaz, is an impediment in his bid against candidates benefiting from their parties' electoral apparatus.

Although Pereira remains the favourite for this election, the fragmentation of the electorate within the PAIGC itself

makes a second round highly likely. In such an event, Pereira's victory is far from assured, as he is unlikely to get the backing of his main opponents.

What are the risks and challenges?

A number of political actors in Guinea-Bissau are suspicious of the electoral process and have asked for the revision of the voters' roll. There is also uncertainty regarding the role of the newly created secretariat for elections. Guinea-Bissau already has two bodies dedicated to the management of electoral processes: the National Electoral Commission and the Office for Technical Assistance to the Electoral Process.

In order to minimise the risk of disagreement over the election results, the government should comply with the decision of the 55th ECOWAS Summit. This decision stipulates that, in the absence of consensus, the voters' roll used for the legislative elections must be maintained. It also recommends that the government clarify the role of the secretariat in order to dispel any suspicions of fraud.

While significant, these disagreements over the process must in no way overshadow the post-election challenges, which constitute the real issue in this election.

> The victory of an opposition candidate would place the country back on the same track it has been on since 2015

One of the main challenges is the stability of the government established after the parliamentary elections. This stability depends largely on the outcome of the presidential poll. In the event of a victory by one of the candidates of the parliamentary majority – the PAIGC or the APU-PDGB – the government is at less risk of collapsing. Such a scenario would allow for the consolidation of the coalition and for the stability of the government.

At the same time, the victory of an opposition candidate would place the country back on the same track it has been on since 2015, as the two heads of the executive branch, the prime minister and the president, will then belong to opposing parties.

Guinea-Bissau has a semi-presidential system with a president elected by universal suffrage and a prime minister representing the parliamentary majority holding most of the executive powers. The resulting power struggle, especially between the protagonists of the crisis, could lead to the paralysis of the country's institutions.

These institutions need to be functional to implement the structural reforms necessary for the stabilisation of Guinea-Bissau. As such, it is imperative that the constitution is revised and that the deficiencies of the political system, one of the factors causing instability, are corrected.

Only with much stronger institutions can the country effectively tackle the recovery of its economy and the fight against drug trafficking. The seizures of 789 kg of cocaine in March 2019 and nearly two tonnes in August 2019 are a clear reminder that the country remains one of the most important transit points for drugs from Latin America.

Promoting dialogue while remaining firm

The international community should mobilise in order to guarantee the transparency of the process in order to avoid any dispute over the results that could add to the complexity of the situation.

On 7 October a joint mission led by ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) visited the country. This mission reminded political actors of the decision by the 55th ECOWAS Summit to support the government that emerged from the parliamentary elections on 10 March. The main duties of the government remain organising the presidential election in an inclusive and transparent manner, complying with the electoral timetable already established and maintaining the current register.

This kind of initiative should be renewed as the presidential election approaches. It gives international actors the opportunity to resolve their disagreements while adopting a directive and firm position, even if it implies providing for sanctions in order to deter potential troublemakers. The persistence of the crisis since 2015 is a clear indication of the duplicity of some political actors who do not hesitate to renege on the agreements they have signed.

Such support from the international community should intensify after the elections, when Guinea-Bissau will need assistance to implement political reforms, revive its economy and, above all, address the internal factors of instability and the external threat caused by transnational organised crime

Coordination between the PSC and the AU Commission is key, says Morocco's ambassador

Morocco chaired the PSC in September 2019, with a focus on strengthened relations between the PSC and the African Union Commission (AUC), climate change and a number of conflict issues. Ambassador Mohamed Arrouchi, permanent representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the AU and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, told the *PSC Report* about the outcomes of these meetings and how Morocco sees the AU's role in resolving conflicts in Africa.

What are the main results of the PSC during the month of September, chaired by the Kingdom of Morocco?

I would like to thank the Institute for Security Studies for its commitment towards peace and security in Africa and for providing Morocco with this opportunity.

The Kingdom of Morocco chaired the PSC for the first time since it has returned to the AU. Indeed, the chairmanship of the Kingdom of Morocco has been guided by a sense of responsibility and the principles of neutrality and objectivity, while prioritising the interests of Africa.

During September, the PSC, as a collective decision-making organ, organised, for the first time, a session dedicated to an interaction between the PSC members and the AUC, with the objective of strengthening coordination between both organs. It was agreed to hold such an interaction on a regular basis.

> The Kingdom of Morocco chaired the PSC for the first time since it has returned to the AU

The PSC also scheduled, for the first time, a meeting on the theme 'The interdependence between peace, security and development', at the ministerial level, which requested that the chairperson of the AUC further enhance collaboration and coordination between the different AUC departments, to fully support the PSC, taking into account the interdependence between peace, security and development. In this regard, the AUC chairperson will submit, once a year, a report on the measures taken to this end.

Meanwhile, the PSC met during an open session with AU partners to discuss, for the first time, the issue of climate change with a focus on Africa's small island developing states. This meeting was a unique occasion within the AU

September
2019

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THE PSC

to understand the specificities of these countries, which are the most affected by the existential threat of climate change.

Indeed, the Kingdom of Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, attaches strategic importance to the issue of climate change on our continent, which we perceive as the most vulnerable to and a victim of a global climate injustice.

This meeting stressed the need to enhance support to the small island developing states of Africa and urged the AUC chairperson to appoint a special envoy for climate change and security. It also 'called for the operationalisation of the PRC sub-committee on the environment', which could become an important institutional tool to enable the AU to address all the issues related to the effects of climate change on African countries.

The PSC has also underscored the importance of prioritising early warning systems, prevention mechanisms and disaster risk reduction strategies. It stressed the need to guarantee greater coordination between African initiatives such as the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI), the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) and the Initiative for Adaptation of African Agriculture (AAA). It also called for the urgent operationalisation of the Commission dedicated to Island States, which is the initiative emanating from the first African Summit for Action, held in Marrakech on 16 November 2016.

> The PSC underscored the importance of prioritising early warning systems, prevention mechanisms and disaster risk reduction strategies

During this month the PSC also considered various situations and conflicts in Africa, notably the lifting of the suspension of Sudan after a historical agreement signed between Sudanese stakeholders. It also considered the maritime boundary dispute between Somalia and Kenya.

Finally, the council, at the level of ministers, considered the situation in Libya. It reiterated its deep concern about the seriousness of the situation prevailing in Libya and its dangerous repercussions for the security and stability of the region and the continent as a whole. The council also supported the decision of the AU High Level Committee on Libya, taken at its meeting of 8 July 2019, on the appointment of a joint AU/UN envoy for Libya.

The council requested the AUC chairperson to play his role and take necessary and concrete measures, in close consultation with the UN, to ensure the effective involvement of the AU, with a view to resolving the Libyan crisis.

How should the AU PSC manage its relationship with the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the EUPSC?

First of all, the UNSC has the primary responsibility for maintaining and promoting international peace and security, notably in Africa, which still is the

ISLAND STATES AND CLIMATE CHANGE WERE DISCUSSED IN SEPTEMBER

continent most affected by armed conflict. This primary responsibility comes with obligations towards the African continent.

Meanwhile, the AU is playing a key role in many crises and has, through the PSC and other organs, contributed to finding political and lasting solutions to some situations.

The relationship between the two bodies, under chapter VIII of the UN Charter and article 17 of the PSC Protocol, should be reinforced, through more coordination and the harmonisation of approaches, on the basis of comparative advantages.

At the end of October the two councils will hold the 13th Join Annual Consultative Meeting, which will focus on the situations in Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Sahel region. This meeting's main goal is to ensure common understanding of the security challenges on our continent.

The partnership with the EU, one of the major actors of development in the world, should be oriented through a holistic approach

The partnership with the EUPSC, which is not a decision-making organ, is quite different. However, it should also be reinforced, as the EU is a major actor of peace and security in Africa, especially through its efforts in Somalia, the CAR and the Sahel region. The EUPSC is called on to assist African countries in building their own capacities, notably through the transfer of know-how in different areas such as security sector reform, border governance, countering terrorism and transnational criminality, and cybersecurity.

The partnership with the EU, one of the major actors of development in the world, should be oriented through a holistic approach, which rests on two main pillars, namely security and sustainable development.

How can the working relationship between the PSC and the AUC be improved?

One of the top priorities when Morocco chaired the PSC in September was strengthening the working methods of the PSC, in full compliance with the results of the PSC retreats on its working methods, including the last one recently hosted by Morocco.

The Kingdom of Morocco has worked jointly with other member states to strengthen the efficiency of the PSC, by empowering the council with a real intergovernmental dimension and ownership.

These retreats have often stressed the need for more coordination between the PSC and the AUC. In this regard, the PSC scheduled the above-mentioned interactive session with top officials of the AUC. Such an initiative

PSC–AUC relations

A PRIORITY FOR MOROCCO

proved to be pertinent, as member states stressed the urgent need for more effective implementation of AU policy organs' decisions.

Indeed, this interaction was the first of its kind in that it assembled AUC officials at a frank, clear and open debate on means and ways to reinforce cooperation and coordination between the departments of the AUC and the PSC. The AUC chairperson is very enthusiastic and supportive of regular interactions between the PSC and the commission.

How can the PSC respond more effectively to emerging and existing conflicts in Africa?

It is apparent that the AU mechanisms of early warning and early response must still be reinforced.

We need to urgently proceed to the reconfiguration of our early warning system, which should operate and proceed with clear indicators of risk evaluation.

In this regard, we need to work more effectively on mediation and conflict prevention in order to deal with the first signs of crises on the horizon and address them before they become conflicts and eventually armed conflicts.

> This interaction was the first of its kind in that it assembled AU Commission officials at a frank and open debate

The ministerial meeting of the PSC held on 27 September 2019 on the margins of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly recalled the imperative to deploy all available preventive diplomatic tools and mechanisms at the national, regional, continental and global level to enable the continent to effectively prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

The Kingdom of Morocco has always put its wide experience in peacekeeping operations, mediation, peacebuilding, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and the mitigation of climate change at the disposal of African countries. It is very important to share experiences and best practices between African countries.

With regard to the lifting of sanctions on Sudan, have the steps undertaken thus far satisfied all

the concerns of the PSC? And how can the AU continue to maintain pressure in order to ensure full implementation of the transitional process?

The PSC should not adopt an approach that operates within the logic of pressure. The new government of Sudan should be accompanied, notably at the economic level and through institutional capacity building, in order to satisfy the legitimate needs of the people of Sudan.

> Morocco as PSC chair for September was glad to see Sudan coming back to its institutional family very quickly

Morocco as PSC chair for September was glad to see Sudan coming back to its institutional family very quickly. This decision was taken unanimously by the same 15 member states that took the decision of suspension, and it reflects, certainly, the trust of the PSC in the historical agreement that has been signed by the Sudanese stakeholders.

In this regard, the PSC has highly commended the efforts of the chairperson of the AUC and his team on the ground, as well as IGAD's [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] efforts, under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed, which have launched a successful transitional phase.

Furthermore, the transitional government of Sudan has set as a main priority restoring peace and long-term stability in the whole of the Sudanese territory, including the Darfur region. In this regard, the withdrawal of UNAMID [UN–AU Mission in Darfur] from the Sudanese territory should also be a priority, in order to allow a successful transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, notably after the dialogue opened recently between the transitional government of Sudan, under the leadership of Abdalla Hamdok, and different armed groups in Darfur.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the people of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, through the person of Dr Ahmed, who has been awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize. His efforts have clearly demonstrated to the rest of the continent that where there is a will, there is a way.

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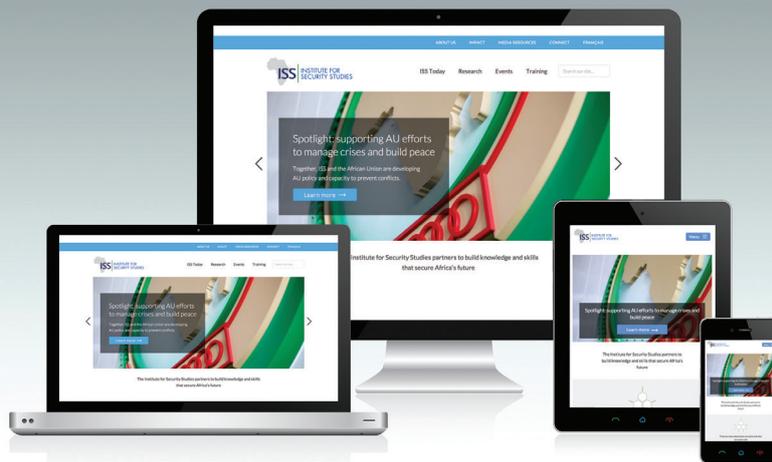
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The Peace and Security Council Report analyses developments and decisions at the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC). The monthly publication is the only one of its kind dedicated to providing current analysis of the PSC's work. It is written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

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