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On the Agenda

EU–AU relations: Beyond institutional twinning

The joint annual consultative meeting between the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the European Union Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) took place on 16 October. It is crucial that these meetings not only focus on current crises, and that contentious issues are not swept under the rug. In-depth discussions of tricky questions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) or how to implement the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) will move the relationship forward.

The 8th joint annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the EU PSC is the most recent illustration of the constant interaction between the two organisations in the area of peace and security. There has been a gradual strengthening of links between these similar organs since their first meeting in 2008. It is important that a more consistent dialogue is fostered in order to have a greater impact on shared peace and security challenges.

There has been a gradual strengthening of links between these organisations since 2008

Growing sophistication

On 30 September 2008, PSC members met their counterparts from the EU PSC for the first time. According to a report by the European Council, published in December 2008, this first meeting was an ‘opportunity of further enhancing crisis management ties and dialogue between the African Union and European Union, with regard to such essential issues as strengthening the African peace and security architecture and African peacekeeping capacities’. Seven years later, this meeting has become annual and is the main institutional mechanism for the implementation of the EU–Africa partnership on peace and security.

The relationship between the two organisations has been reinforced despite differences in size (27 EU members versus 15 AU members), mandates (the PSC is a deciding body while the EU PSC advises the European Council) and capacity (the EU-PSC relies on several already established bodies while the PSC is supported by fewer organs with lesser capacities).

EU foots the bill for AU peacekeeping

The strengthening of relations has been mutually beneficial within the framework of the Joint EU–AU Strategy. From an African perspective, it offers the PSC the opportunity to establish a more direct relationship with the main EU decision-making body in the area of security, namely the European Council (which the EU PSC advises). This is significant since all AU peace support operations (such as in Darfur and Somalia) are mostly funded through the African Peace Facility. The EU Commission manages this financial instrument, while allocation decisions fall within the competency of the EU PSC.

PSC Chairperson

H.E Rachid Benlounes

Ambassador of Algeria to Ethiopia, the AU and the UNECA

Current members of the PSC

Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

From a European perspective, a strong relationship with the AU ensures that the principles of ownership and joint action are respected, thereby ensuring that the EU does not act unilaterally in Africa.

This year saw increasing sophistication in the attempts to ensure a shared understanding of crises prior to greater coordination. Last February, the PSC and the EU PSC undertook a joint field mission to Mali to support efforts towards establishing peace and security in the country.

A strong relationship with the AU ensures that the principles of ownership and joint action are respected

Shared challenges

According to a statement by the PSC, the 8th joint annual consultative meeting on 16 October was preceded by a joint retreat as an opportunity 'to share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in Africa and Europe'.

Participants agreed on new mechanisms to enhance their cooperation like organising briefings, joint information gathering and analysis on the ground and further joint retreats extended to RECs, EU mediators and special envoys.

Various issues were addressed by the participants this year. This included shared challenges (migrants, terrorism); crises and conflict situations where the EU and AU are largely in agreement in terms of strategy (Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Mali/Sahel, South Sudan, Somalia) and the implementation of APSA. The challenge of this 2015 meeting centred around the ability of participants to reduce the gap between their respective approaches to issues such as the ICC and the crisis in Burundi. For instance, while the EU has imposed sanctions against four Burundian officials, the AU is less eager to do so. Both parties acknowledged their respective approaches without any attempt to coordinate their views.

How to improve the impact of AU/EU meetings?

The EU–Africa dialogue still suffers from several limitations, such as the focus on form rather than substance. For example, the PSC and EU PSC's joint field mission to Mali took place in a country where neither is the primary actor. From this perspective, reaching a common assessment does not have any policy consequences where these organs would be the primary decision makers. Moreover, two questions arise about the joint annual consultative meeting in its current form.

The first one deals with its orientation. Looking at the past seven events, it is clear that there is a tendency towards reviewing current crises rather than addressing broader themes. The 8th edition was no exception. The table below shows that the PSC and EU PSC meetings are increasingly focused on asserting common positions on current crises while the strengthening of APSA is addressed unevenly. According to a Swedish study, 'The [first PSC–EU PSC] meeting was seen as a success, however with a certain tendency of the African side preferring to discuss current crises rather than [the] AU's internal capacity building.'

Strengthening African capacities in managing crises is the main goal of the AU–EU strategy in peace and security matters and the PSC–EU PSC meeting is meant to be the main instrument to implement this goal. Consequently there is a growing risk that this mechanism could lose its original strategic outreach to favour short-term issues.

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MEMBERS ON THE PSC

27

MEMBERS ON THE EU PSC

There is a danger that both the PSC and the EU PSC react to current crises instead of designing long-term coordinated and proactive responses.

Too many topics

The second question is about the content of these meetings. The joint annual consultative meeting gathers at least 35 participants, and the table below shows the extensive array of issues to be addressed during the meeting. Ensuring a better dialogue among the partners would mean reducing the number of themes addressed during the meeting, since the number of participants involved cannot be reduced.

Moreover, it is essential that the agenda at the ambassadorial level deals only with contentious issues. Previous meetings have shown a tendency to concentrate on points of agreement, and with less focus on disagreements, or attempts to overcome them. A consistent partnership on peace and security matters would require that the joint annual consultative meeting becomes an opportunity to overcome disagreements instead of sweeping them under the rug. Such an evolution would allow a better assessment of the impact of the AU and EU PSC's meetings.

The impact of the joint annual meetings is yet to be measured. Certainly it has helped to reinforce the institutional position of both the PSC and the EU PSC in their respective organisations. But their impact on the reinforcement of APSA, or on conflict resolution in a broader sense, is less evident. This is in part due to the abovementioned focus on current issues.

The impact of the joint annual meetings is yet to be measured

Planning ahead: 2020

Furthermore, it is critical that both the PSC and the EU PSC address the broad framework of their relationship. The programme of the 12 October EU Foreign Affairs Council included the issue of 'EU-ACP relations (post 2020) after the Cotonou Agreement expires'. It is opportune that this issue be raised ahead of time by both organs in Ethiopia.

The coexistence of the Joint Africa–EU Strategy and the Cotonou Agreement still results in a complicated and overlapping decision-making process that may hamper the final impact of the coordination between the AU and the EU in responding to crises. Consequently, acknowledging the security–development nexus and the shared ambition to treat 'Africa as one' calls for the streamlining of the existing instruments.

Relevant documents

Council of the European Union, *Presidency Report on ESDP*, 16686/08, 9 December 2008.

Camille Elowson, *The Joint Africa–EU Strategy, A Study of the Peace and Security Partnership*, FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency, March 2009.

Thomas Muehlmann and Umberto Tavalato, 'Cooperation between the PSC and the EU's Political and Security Committee', *The African Union Peace and Security Council*, Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, 2013.

Meetings	Themes
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current crises • Modalities of partnership • Support to APSA and strengthening African peacekeeping capabilities
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening capacities for the management and resolution of crisis • Prevention, management and resolution of disputes around elections • Experience and lessons from conflicts in Europe • Conflict situations (Somalia, Sudan) • Coordination within the framework of the United Nations
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict prevention and crisis situations (Sudan, Somalia) • Maritime safety and security issues • Peace and security partnership • AU-EU coordination • Joint working methods
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis situations (Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, Somalia) • Maritime safety and security • Transnational threats • Joint working methods
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somalia • South Sudan • Mali and the Sahel • Guinea-Bissau • Regional action against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) • Counterterrorism • Coordination on global issues
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mali and the Sahel • Guinea-Bissau • Somalia • Sudan/South-Sudan • Democratic Republic of the Congo/Great Lakes • Regional cooperation against the LRA
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation in the area of peace and security • Specific crisis and conflict situations (South Sudan, Horn of Africa, Central African Republic, Gulf of Guinea) • Enhancing African capacities in peace and security issues

Situation Analysis

Madagascar still not out of the woods



The situation in Madagascar was on the agenda of the PSC on 21 September 2015. The AU also conducted important security sector reform in the country from 21–25 September. Yet despite successful regional mediation to solve the political impasse in the country there are still many outstanding issues to be resolved, notably on the economic front.

In the last two years, Madagascar has faded from the African agenda. This is hardly surprising: with a democratically elected president in place, the country is – on paper, at least – on the road to recovery, and there are plenty of other crises to command the attention of the continent and its institutions.

However, while there are encouraging signs of progress, it is still too early to trumpet the success of the mediation led by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as the country's new democratic dispensation remains weak and under-funded – leaving it all too vulnerable to setbacks. At the same time, Madagascar is grappling with an extreme humanitarian crisis that, if left unattended, threatens to undo all the progress made so far.

The country's new democratic dispensation remains weak and under-funded

More work needed

In 2009, Madagascar's President Marc Ravalomanana was unseated in a coup led by former DJ Andry Rajoelina. Ravalomanana was forced into exile, and Rajoelina took charge. The coup was swiftly condemned by the international community and led to the suspension of Madagascar from the AU.

It was only in January 2014 that the PSC welcomed Madagascar back into the AU fold, following the successful elections held in late 2013. These were won by Hery Rajaonarimampianina, the current president. The elections came after a lengthy mediation process led by SADC, with strong support from the AU.

In lifting the suspension, the PSC in a communiqué paid tribute to former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano and former commissioner for peace and security Ramtane Lamamra for their leadership of the mediation, and recognised 'the completion of the transition process and the restoration of constitutional order' in Madagascar. Peace and Security Chairperson Smail Chergui continues to play a key role in his position as Chair of the International Contact Group on Madagascar.

The successful resolution of Madagascar's political crisis has been hailed as a major accomplishment for both SADC and AU diplomacy, and an example of the effectiveness of African solutions for African problems. It is hard to disagree with this claim: the situation was resolved peacefully and democratically, and has resulted in a relatively stable, internationally-recognised government, even if the mediation process was at times delayed by the competing agendas of the various

January 2014

MADAGASCAR RE-ADMITTED TO
THE AU

international organisations involved (which also included the International Organisation of La Francophonie and the Indian Ocean Commission).

There are, however, signs that this new government is beginning to take strain, and that old rivalries are beginning to derail its progress.

To a certain extent we can call Madagascar a success story for African diplomacy, because the initial objective has been achieved, which is the restoration of the democratic order that was interrupted in 2009,' said David Zounmenou, senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies.

There are signs the government is beginning to take strain

Zounmenou argues, however, that elections and a new president do not mean that Madagascar's problems are now over. 'African diplomacy has this tendency of ignoring that the true work begins when the government has been sworn in. Look at Madagascar; the political situation is far from being resolved. You have new conflicts developing and building on old ones, new allegiances developing, new configurations happening ... The second step which the AU, SADC and all external partners miss is how to help the country build institutions. So the institution-building has not had the support of the international community, probably because of the traditional argument of respect for sovereignty.'

Rivalries old and new

When Rajaonarimampianina was elected, most observers – including Rajoelina – thought that he would be a puppet acting for Rajoelina, who had been barred from running in the elections. But Rajaonarimampianina turned out to be very much his own man, with his own agenda. He was also determined to work outside of Madagascar's traditional power structures, which only serve to encourage poor governance and corruption.

'You've got a guy there [Rajaonarimampianina] who is relatively on it, working through systems which are not the ordinary patronage systems, and is cautious on relying too much on big business showing him too much largesse. So the reality dawns that his manoeuvrability within that structure limited. [Because he's trying to do things differently], he's in a straitjacket,' said Piers Pigou, the Southern Africa Project Director for the International Crisis Group.

Another constraint is that the government is nearly bankrupt. According to one United Nations (UN) official in Madagascar, things are so tight that the president rarely travels domestically unless he can find someone else to pay for it.

While this situation would be a challenge for any government, it is complicated further by challenges from the two men who had sparked the political crisis in the first place: Ravalomanana and Rajoelina, both of whom have agitated to remove Rajaonarimampianina from office. In fact, their opposition to him is so pronounced that it forced a temporary alliance in Parliament between their respective political movements, Tiako i Madagasikara (TIM) and Together with Rajoelina (MAPAR).

TIM and MAPAR worked together to force through an impeachment vote in May this year against Rajaonarimampianina, which passed with a convincing 121 of 151 votes. This impeachment vote was later thrown out by the Constitutional Court, which called the grounds for impeachment 'unfounded'.

To its credit, the AU was quick to reinforce the court's decision. '[AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma] urges the Malagasy political stakeholders to demonstrate a high sense of responsibility and to spare their country a new cycle of instability, which could only complicate the mobilization of the support that Madagascar needs for its socio-economic recovery, after several years of crisis,' said the office of the chairperson in a statement.

Although Rajaonarimampianina remains in power, it is unclear whether he will be able to finish his term

Although Rajaonarimampianina remains in power, it is unclear whether he will be able to finish his term, which expires in 2018. His rivals are looking for any pretext to unseat him, which could precipitate another power struggle between Ravalomanana and Rajoelina.

Another key player – and a major factor in continuing stability – is the security sector. 'An unknown question remains the security sector, which had a hand previously in king making. To their credit they've remained in the background this time,' said Pigou, who attributes this to some canny appointments. 'Hery made some significant moves to bring in commanders who would be more loyal to a constitutional dispensation than to particular individuals.'

In this context, it is important to note the security sector reform (SSR) sensitisation process conducted by the AU in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, which concluded in late September. The process aimed 'to sensitise senior officials and civil society on security sector reforms to support the government and

society in building the capacities of Malagasy institutions in preparation for a national SSR process'. In a press release, the AU hailed the commitment of the Malagasy authorities to the SSR process.

Humanitarian situation

The ongoing power struggle between Madagascar's politicians takes place against the backdrop of one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the world. This year alone, Madagascar has suffered the devastating effects of a plague of locusts, which decimated crops; flooding, which displaced tens of thousands of people in the central regions; drought in the southern regions, leaving tens of thousands more at risk of severe acute malnutrition; and regular cyclones.

With at least 70% of the population living below the poverty line (some estimates suggest this figure is higher) and 80% living in rural areas isolated from basic services, the impact of these disasters is amplified. According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 47% of Malagasy children under five now suffer from chronic malnutrition, which is likely to affect both their physical and mental growth, and will have a huge economic impact on the country in years to come (World Bank estimates suggest that countries with high levels of chronic malnutrition lose 2–3% of their gross domestic product as a direct result).

For Zounmenou, this is where the international community could be doing more. 'The political instability continues to worsen living conditions. We need economic policies that take into account the fact that 70% of people live in poverty in Madagascar. Unfortunately, the response to Madagascar seems to be over,' he said.

Pigou concurs. 'Most people have been outside the formal economy for quite some time. There's been a massive falling away following 2009 in living standards. The glass half full argument is that the steady decline was arrested, but it hasn't improved, and there are not many prospects for that to happen,' he said.

Curiously, despite the severity of the problem, Madagascar receives relatively little in the way of humanitarian or development assistance. UNICEF's country representative Elke Wisch describes Madagascar as a 'donor orphan', noting that the assistance it does receive is not in proportion to the scale of the problem (or comparable to what other countries, with similar problems, receive). All too often, Wisch argues, Madagascar is only understood through the prism of its famous biodiversity, its cute lemurs, or the animated film trilogy ostensibly based on the island. Against this, the country's all-too-real humanitarian emergency is often overlooked.

And this, perhaps, is where the AU and regional organisations can continue to make a meaningful difference in Madagascar. Clearly, progress has been made on the political front, although the fragilities of the current set-up are just as obvious. But Madagascar's crisis is not only political, it is also humanitarian, and this has been overlooked for too long (and the two crises feed into each other: it is hard to envisage any government retaining credibility without bringing meaningful socio-economic development).

Although the mediation in Madagascar has rightfully been hailed as a success story for African diplomacy, it is too early for self-congratulation. Madagascar still needs help, and a lot of it. The PSC in particular has the power to make sure that Madagascar remains on the African and international agenda, and that the country receives the attention it deserves – and needs.

Relevant documents

Press release: AU and partners end joint security sector reform sensitisation in Madagascar (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/com.pr.joint.-magascar-25.09.2015.pdf>)

Press release: The AU calls for restraint and a sense of responsibility in Madagascar (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-com-madagascar-17-06-2015.pdf>)

Communiqué of the 415th meeting of the PSC on the situation in Madagascar (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-pr-415-madagascar-27-01-2014.pdf>)



Addis Insight

Burkina Faso a test for the AU's impact on crises

On 17 September 2015, less than a month before general elections were to take place, the *Regiment de sécurité présidentielle* (the presidential guard, or RSP) in Burkina Faso, led by Gen. Gilbert Diendéré, carried out a coup d'état against the transitional government in Ouagadougou. The coup was short-lived, thanks to the intervention of the PSC, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and a steadfast refusal by the majority of the population to accept the coup. However, there is some question about the extent of the PSC's role in the resolution of this crisis, versus that of the regional leaders.

The events that unfolded in the days following the coup indicate that in this case, the PSC acted on principle, basing its decisions on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, signed and ratified by Burkina Faso in 2010. The PSC rejected any compromise with Diendéré and his RSP and did not entertain any of their grievances. ECOWAS, however, offered the coup leaders a way out in the name of keeping the peace and preventing a further escalation of the crisis. It also called for 'inclusive elections', slated initially for 11 October 2015, thereby giving way to Diendéré's demand that the old guard from the former ruling party and its allies, who had been excluded from the polls, be allowed to participate.

ECOWAS offered the coup leaders a way out in the name of keeping the peace

Interestingly, four members of the PSC who are also members of ECOWAS took contradictory decisions – first as part of the PSC and then as ECOWAS – in the space of just a few days. This tricky situation is something the AU will have to deal with in more detail in future. The much-acclaimed principle of subsidiarity has again come under severe strain.

It is also pertinent to ask what the people of Burkina Faso think about the AU's intervention. After all, it was by popular uprising that former president Blaise Compaoré was ousted less than a year before. The coup d'état was thus a blow to the democratisation process.

According to Institute for Security Studies researcher Ibrahim Maiga, 'the AU definitely gained in credibility among ordinary citizens. The AU's firm stance reinforced the determination of the civil society to push for the status quo ante.'

AU guided by principles

In dealing with the crisis in Burkina Faso, the AU based its decisions on three principles: supporting the country's constitution, insisting that the security forces be

under the authority of a civilian government, and seeking coordinating international efforts to solve the problem.

When the first crisis broke out in October 2014, on the eve of a vote in Parliament to allow a constitutional change to permit Compaoré to serve a third term, the AU stood by the principle of upholding the constitution. When the popular uprising resulted in a military take-over and the suspension of the constitution – another short-lived coup – the AU strongly condemned this in its statement of 3 November 2014.

The AU gave Burkina Faso one week to appoint a civilian transitional government. It decided not to impose sanctions following the nomination of Michel Kafando as interim head of state.

However, it remained concerned about the role of the military in the transitional government, notably because Prime Minister Isaac Zida was among those who seized power after Compaoré had left. In statements in February and July this year, AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma expressed her concern about the role of the military in Burkina Faso.

Finally, several actions by the AU indicate a strong desire to coordinate efforts. Dlamini-Zuma appointed former Togolese prime minister Edem Kodjo as a special envoy to coordinate efforts between the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations (UN). Kodjo played a supporting role in drafting the constitutional transitional charter that was adopted on 16 November 2014. Two days later the AU created the International Follow-up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF), which it co-chairs with ECOWAS and the UN.

A few days after the coup, the AU instituted strong measures

Hard line against the coup leaders

The same principles that guided the AU's earlier actions were adhered to during the September 2015 coup.

Within a few days after the coup, the AU had instituted several strong measures, cracking down on Diendéré and his cohort and sending a strong message that coups would not be tolerated. The pan-African organisation went as far as labelling the coup leaders as 'terrorists' – a statement that has far-reaching legal implications.

On the political front it immediately suspended Burkina Faso from all AU activities and imposed a travel ban on the coup leaders if the status quo ante was not restored within 96 hours of the 18 September statement. It also called for the suspension of all economic, political and military cooperation by international partners and imposed an asset freeze on the coup leaders. The AU also called for consultations with the West African Economic and Monetary Union in order to deny the coup leaders the use of Burkina Faso's reserves in the Central Bank of West African States.

Clearly, the AU was determined not to make concessions to the coup leaders and to insist on a return to the status quo ante. It also focussed on joint action. Its first reaction to the coup was a joint communiqué with the UN and ECOWAS. However, in practice, the way in which ECOWAS handled the coup was not in line with what the AU and the PSC had in mind.

4 November 2014

AU INSISTS ON A RETURN TO
CIVILIAN RULE

18 September 2015

AU CONDEMNS THE COUP,
SUSPENDS BURKINA FASO

Despite the emphasis on joint action and the focus on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the coordinated effort unravelled quickly as regional leaders took a much more conciliatory stance than the PSC.

ECOWAS looking for compromise

ECOWAS, as the sub-regional organisation, was naturally in the driving seat in engaging the coup leaders in Ouagadougou. Current ECOWAS chair Senegalese President Macky Sall and Benin's President Thomas Yayi Boni were sent to Burkina Faso to meet the leaders hours after the coup took place. The focus was thus on finding an immediate solution and a way out of the crisis. 'Our role is to put an end to the escalation of things in order to prevent the country from descending into violence,' Sall stated at the time.

Following this visit and discussions with local actors, ECOWAS proposed a draft political agreement that called for the release of the detainees; the restoration of transitional institutions and the withdrawal of the military from the government. So far, so good.

However, ECOWAS also wanted to grant amnesty to Diendéré and his men, thereby limiting any action against them.

ECOWAS also called for an 'open, inclusive, free and transparent process', which, reading between the lines, meant support for one of the RSP's main concerns and likely the reason behind the coup: to allow former ruling party members to participate in the upcoming elections. They had controversially been excluded by the constitutional court – a ruling challenged by the ECOWAS Court of Justice.

These proposals by ECOWAS sharply contrasted with the AU's call for the reinstatement of the status quo ante, without any conditions.

The proposals by ECOWAS sharply contrasted with the AU's call

In the final communiqué following a meeting in Abuja on 22 September, after Kafando had been released but not yet reinstated, ECOWAS heads of state placed the emphasis on dialogue and national reconciliation, rather than sanctions. 'At this stage where dialogue is crucial for national unity and stability in Burkina Faso, the Heads of State and Government call for peace, open-mindedness and a spirit of compromise,' they said.

ECOWAS leaders also in no uncertain terms told the PSC to mind its own business. 'It [ECOWAS] also emphasises respect for the principle of subsidiarity which governs relations between the African Union and regional economic communities,' said the communiqué.

Burkinabe opt for the AU solution

What transpired subsequently had very little to do with compromise or a quest for dialogue and reconciliation. In fact, on 25 September the RSP was dissolved and the transitional government was reinstated. There was no more talk of amnesty for the coup leaders.

However, the sanctions against the coup leaders were put on hold, thanks to the happy *dénouement* that allowed ECOWAS to save face and prevented the PSC from openly contradicting the sub-regional body.

At a meeting of PSC heads of state in New York on 26 September, the PSC welcomed the reinstatement of the interim government and lifted the suspension of Burkina Faso. In its statement the PSC once again quoted the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance as the legal basis for its decision to lift the suspension. There was no mention of the draft political agreement mediated by ECOWAS and not a word on amnesty. In fact, the PSC underlined Article 25 of the charter, which stipulates 'that perpetrators of unconstitutional changes shall not hold any position of responsibility in the political institutions of their states'.

Heads of state of the AU will have to decide on the issue of subsidiarity

Lessons learnt and options going forward

This is not the first time Africa sees a lack of coherence between the PSC and regional economic communities. So what is to be done?

Despite a clear desire to tackle the problem in Burkina Faso in a coordinated fashion when the crisis escalated because of the coup d'état on 17 September, no special envoy was appointed to coordinate the response, as had been the case in 2014. This may have prevented the dissension between the PSC and ECOWAS.

To address such a conflict, a facilitator could also be appointed that is a member of both the relevant REC and the PSC. In the case of Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, the Gambia and Guinea were all on the PSC and members of ECOWAS.

Finally, heads of state of the AU Assembly will eventually have to decide on the issue of subsidiarity, which arises time and time again when dealing with crises.

Subsidiarity is based on the premise that RECs' proximity gives them a better understanding of the dynamics of a situation. However, there is a risk that proximity could result in complacency. In Burkina Faso, ECOWAS was flexible in its search for a compromise, whereas the AU was rigid in its approach.

In this kind of situation, the AU could bring distance and impartiality. Fortunately, the dissolution of the presidential guard, which was finally overrun by the army, has put this debate to rest in the Burkina Faso context – for the moment. However, the question will not go away. Is the PSC merely an echo chamber for regional solutions? Or are RECs bound to implement the PSC's resolutions? African leaders must give guidance in order to ensure a coherent and effective response to crises.

Relevant documents

ECOWAS, *Final Communiqué – Extraordinary Session of the Political Authority of Heads of State and Government on the Political Crisis in Burkina Faso*, 22 September 2015

African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué 544th meeting*, 18 September 2015

African Union, *Press release: The African Union reiterates its full support to the transition in Burkina Faso and to its successful conclusion within the agreed timeframe*, 12 July 2015

African Union, *Press release: The African Union is concerned by the situation in Burkina Faso*, 4 February 2015

African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué 468th meeting*, 18 November 2015

African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué 465th meeting*, 3 November 2015

African Union, *Press release: The African Union calls for a civilian-led and consensual transition in Burkina Faso*, 1 November 2014

Date		Mediation efforts in Burkina Faso by the AU, Ecowas and other actors
2014	30 Oct	AUC Chairperson sends team as part of AU–UN–ECOWAS joint delegation
	31 Oct	President Blaise Compaoré resigns following a popular uprising against his attempt to suppress constitutional term limits
	1 Nov	PSC calls for a civil and consensual transition
	3 Nov	PSC condemns the suspension of the constitution and the military takeover; reassert the imperative of a civilian and consensual transition leading to free and fair elections; reasserts the duty and obligations of the armed and security forces to be at the disposal of the civilian authority
		Appointment of Edem Kodjo as the AU Special Envoy for Burkina Faso
	17 Nov	AUC Chairperson welcomes the drafting of a constitutional transition leading to an election within one year
18 Nov	PSC calls for the creation of an international forum to support the transition in Burkina Faso	
2015	13 Jan	GISTA-BF inaugural meeting in Ouagadougou
	5 Feb	AUC Chairperson reaffirms the obligation of the defence and security forces to respect institutions and the transition agreement
	30 Mar	GISTA-BF second meeting in Ouagadougou
	12 Jun	GISTA-BF third meeting in Johannesburg
	12 Jul	AUC Chairperson reaffirms the imperative need for the defence and security forces to submit to the political authority
	17 Sep	Former president Compaoré's presidential guard (the <i>Regiment de sécurité présidentielle</i> , or RSP) overthrows the transitional government and proclaims a 'National Council of Democracy'
		AU–UN–ECOWAS condemns the abduction of interim President Michel Kafando and Prime Minister Isaac Zida, as well as the violation of the transition agreement, and demands that the defence and security forces submit to the political authorities and, in this case, the transitional government
	18 Sep	PSC adopts sanctions against the coup leaders and calls for the return to the status quo ante
	22 Sep	An ECOWAS draft political agreement requests the release of Kafando and his prime minister, and the withdrawal of the military from the transitional government; limits the transitional government's ability to legislate on anything other than elections; calls for an amnesty law regarding the events of 16–17 September; and includes pro-Compaoré personalities as candidates in the next presidential elections. ECOWAS leaders invite the AU to lift the sanctions on Burkina Faso
	23 Sep	Kafando and his government are reinstated
	25 Sep	Transitional government decides on the dissolution and disarmament of the RSP, against the inclusion of former ruling party candidates and against amnesty
	26 Sep	PSC upholds the implementation of sanctions and lifts Burkina Faso's suspension from AU activities
16 Oct	Coup leader Gen. Gilbert Diendéré to be tried for treason and crimes against humanity by a military court	

PSC Interview

‘Peacekeeping missions are aspirin, what we need is antibiotics’



The United Nations (UN) Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Martin Kobler, stepped down from his position at the end of last month. The *PSC Report* asked him about his term at the helm of one of the world's biggest peacekeeping missions, the UN Mission for the Stabilisation of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Your term as UN Special Representative has come to an end. Do you believe the UN has fulfilled its role in stabilising the conflict in the eastern DRC?

I am leaving the Congo with a feeling of satisfaction with what has been achieved, but the work is far from over. Take a look at the situation in August 2013, when I first arrived: the M23 rebels had taken control of large parts of North Kivu province and were regularly shelling Goma. Today, as I leave the DRC, Goma has become a vibrant city, whose citizens go about their daily activities without any major security threat. The economy is really taking off and there is a new international commercial flight connecting the city to the world, with more airlines to hopefully follow suit in the near future. This is just one example of how the situation has improved.

We could have achieved much more with full cooperation between the Armed Forces of the DRC and MONUSCO

In addition to the defeat of the M23, all major armed groups, including the ADF [Allied Democratic Forces], FRPI [Front for Patriotic Resistance in Ituri], FNL [National Liberation Forces] and various others, have been considerably weakened. This is mainly thanks to the operations carried out jointly by the FARDC [Armed Forces of the DRC], and the MONUSCO force. Our troops are deployed in critical areas in the eastern DRC where their presence has a very important positive impact in terms of improvement of the security situation and stabilisation.

Therefore, yes, I am very proud of what we have achieved so far. But of course not everything is perfect and there is still a lot to do. So, while I am largely satisfied and proud of what we have achieved, I am also frustrated, as we could have achieved much more with full cooperation between the FARDC and MONUSCO. This is especially true of our operations against the FDLR [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda] in North and South Kivu, where progress in the fight against this group has been meagre.

What has been the role of the UN Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in neutralising armed groups in the eastern DRC?

The FIB has played a critical role in neutralising armed groups in the eastern DRC, particularly in the fight against the M23. Of course, this was a collective effort not only

of the FIB but also of other military contingents of MONUSCO. However, it is important to keep in mind that this was the first time that the UN decided to use a dedicated robust brigade to actively go after armed groups. This is unprecedented and it has been critical in helping us get rid of the M23. The FIB shows that our role is not only about joint planning and logistical support, but also about engaging in real jungle warfare with the FARDC – going into the bush and living and fighting together. With its offensive mandate, the FIB is a real game changer and its firepower can help the FARDC fight the armed groups more effectively. That is why we call on the DRC government to work more closely with the mission to neutralise all remaining armed groups, in particular the ADF and the FDLR. We need to make better use of this very powerful new tool that we have in our hands, and we are hopeful as we make progress in our talks with the government to that end.

How easy has it been to work with the troop-contributing countries South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania? How have national concerns influenced their participation in the FIB?

South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania have all been very generous and forthcoming in sending troops required to make the FIB experiment work, and they have proven to be extremely effective and committed to the cause. I can only express my gratitude to them for their generosity and continued support.

They have all served with dedication under the blue flag, under the leadership of the Force Commander with my guidance as the Special Representative of the Secretary General. Now, I know there has been some speculation if and when operations against the FDLR would begin, and if the FIB troops were ready to engage. I personally have not the faintest doubt that the FIB and all other MONUSCO contingents will go full steam after the FDLR or any other group the very moment the order is given. From what I have experienced, FIB troops truly deserve our recognition and congratulations for leading by example and changing the way we think and go about our business of peacekeeping.

Relations between the UN and the government of the DRC have been strained. Have these improved?

As in any relationship, we have had our ups and downs and at times also disagreements with parts of the DRC government on certain issues. For instance, we did not agree on the government's request that MONUSCO reduces its troops beyond the 10% ceiling decided by our mandate. In our view and the view of the Security Council, any further reductions must be linked to concrete security improvements on the ground and the effective restoration of state authority in

areas liberated from armed groups. The Strategic Dialogue with the government was for us an excellent forum where we have made good progress in jointly assessing the security situation on the ground. We will continue to use that forum to work together to identify a suitable timeline for our gradual withdrawal. Our objective is common: MONUSCO has to leave, and the question is now only to agree on our exit strategy and in particular the conditions that will trigger further reductions. Our main concern is to make sure that the country will not be destabilised by our premature, hasty departure. We also insist, in line with our mandate, on a credible electoral process as well as the respect for human rights and political space. How the situation regarding these elements evolves will determine how quickly we can pull out.

MONUSCO has to leave, and the question is now only to agree on our exit strategy

But I would like to stress that I have enjoyed excellent friendship with many among the members of the DRC government. I am particularly very grateful to have a friend in Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo, whom I frequently met with and who has often offered me precious advice. I have also had an exemplary working relationship with the previous minister of defence.

Do you foresee political conflict in the DRC in the run-up to the presidential elections to be held in 2016?

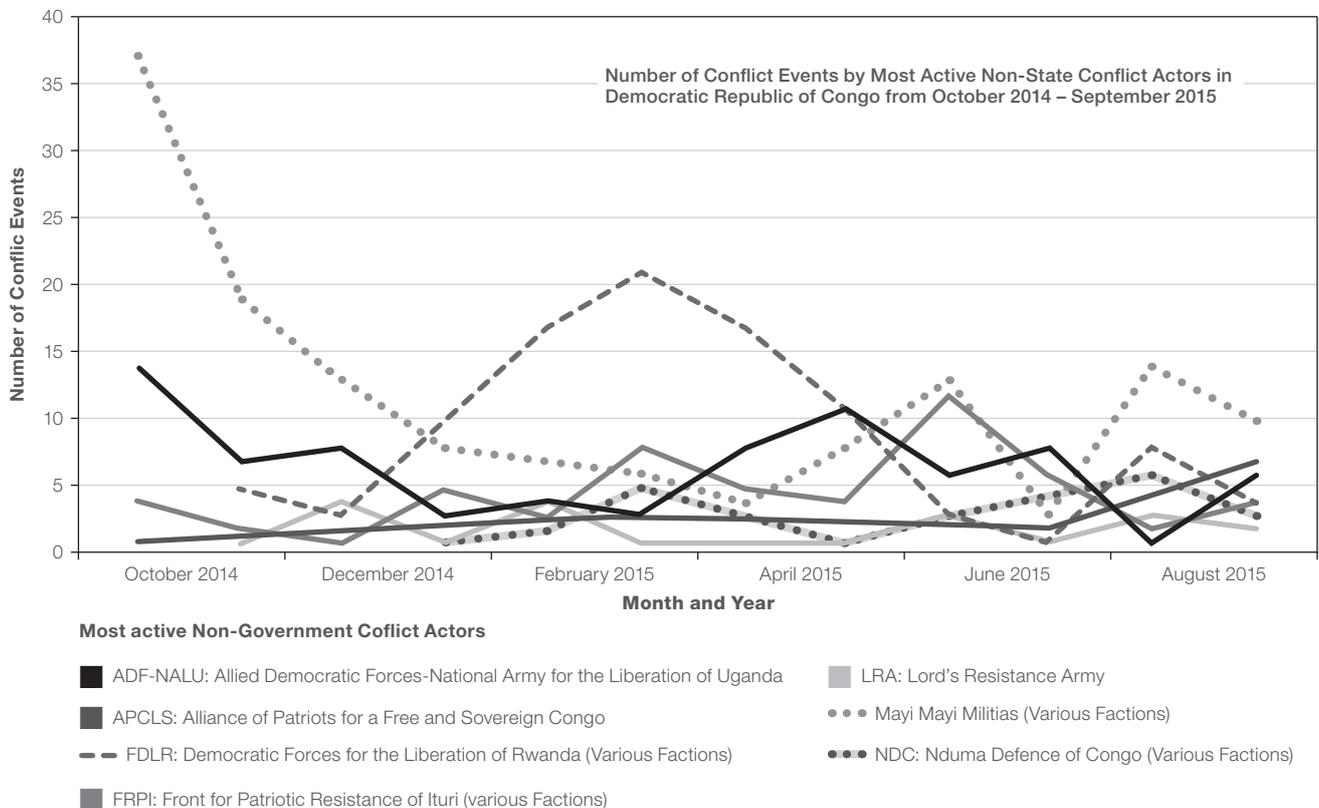
The 2016 elections will be critical for the consolidation of democracy in the DRC. This is a truly historic opportunity: for the first time in the history of the country there can be a peaceful transfer of power from one elected president to another. I remain optimistic, but there are several problems that need to be addressed first. In particular, the electoral calendar needs to be realistic in terms of elections that can actually be held. There is also the question of updating the electoral register to include the youngest voters, as well as of ensuring sufficient funding. MONUSCO is mandated to support the process with logistics and good offices, and we stand ready to do so as long as the constitutional requirements are respected and the timely holding of presidential and legislative elections is not in peril. With 13 months to go till November 2016, I believe that the government still has the time to organise the presidential and legislative elections. But it has to be aware that the Congolese people's expectations with regard to these elections are very high, and if these are to be organised in a timely manner, the time to act is today.

What can be the role of the UN and the AU in early warning, to prevent an escalation of conflict as we have seen in Burundi this year?

There are always clear signs when a political situation starts to deteriorate and risks turning into a violent conflict. The UN and AU [African Union] both have a very important role in alerting the international community on the risks of conflict escalation. Conflict prevention is perhaps the single most important aspect of our work. In a context of heightened tensions related to pre-electoral periods, we need to be especially proactive, working together closely to ensure, through diplomacy and negotiations, that tensions and unrest do not escalate into conflict. In the Great Lakes region, it is worth mentioning the effective shuttle diplomacy of the members of the team of international envoys representing the UN and the AU, as well as the US [United States] and the EU [European Union], who tirelessly travel across the region, engaging in discreet 'behind the scenes' advocacy and diplomatic mediation aimed at identifying and disarming conflicts at their earliest stages. UN- and AU-mandated peacekeeping missions are like aspirin, but what we really need to look for are antibiotics that address the root causes of the conflict, such as good governance and the respect for democratic principles and human rights – the basis of each society. This alone will guarantee sustainable peace.

Ongoing conflict in eastern DRC

The Armed Forces of the DRC decided to attack the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) without MONUSCO's help in February this year, which led to an escalation of attacks by the FDLR. The activity of other non-state actors in the DRC have fluctuated significantly in the past year.



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project conflict trends report October 2015



About the ISS

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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Acknowledgements



GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The publication of the *PSC Report* is made possible through support from the Government of the Swiss Federation, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the government of New Zealand and the Hanns Seidel Stiftung. The ISS is also grateful for the support of the following members of the ISS Partnership Forum: the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the USA.

About us

The *Peace and Security Council (PSC) Report* is an initiative of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) through its office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was established in 2009 with the principal aim of supporting and complementing the work of the African Union (AU) and its Peace and Security Council through the provision of regular, independent and research-based information on and analysis of the PSC and its activities. The *PSC Report* offers the wider constituency of the AU, as well as African civil society organisations, the media and the international diplomatic community a reliable means of following and tracking the work of the PSC.

The *PSC Report* accomplishes these objectives through the publication of regular reports on issues that are either on the PSC's agenda or that deserve its attention. Through its webpage dedicated exclusively to the ISS' work on the PSC, the *PSC Report* also offers regular updates on current and emerging agenda items of the PSC.

The *PSC Report* has no institutional relationship with the AU or the PSC. However, the *Report* works in close collaboration with the AU Peace and Security Department, the Secretariat of the PSC and member states of the PSC.