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On the Agenda

Mali, Somalia and South Sudan at the top of the security agenda at the 29th AU Summit

At the 29th AU Summit, that will take place in Addis Ababa from 27 June to 4 July 2017, African leaders will once again be confronted with the security threats in the Sahel region and the ongoing crises in the Horn of Africa.

Despite some progress since the last summit, funding cuts from international partners such as the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) have impacted on the AU's operations, especially in Mali, Somalia and the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army.

In the case of Mali, the AU had been speaking about establishing an African force to combat the terror threats in Mali and the Sahel region as a whole. But the AU's reluctance to create the mission led the concerned G5 Sahel members (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger) to establish a 5 000-strong joint force in the region in February this year. Although the AU has approved the G5 Sahel mission, the joint force requires logistical and financial support to rein in the excesses of the terror groups.

Beside the immediate terror threats from Iraq and Syria, Europe is cognisant that the Sahel is home to many growing terror groups

The EU, which has been funding many African peace missions, has agreed to give 50 million euros towards the payment of the G5 Sahel troops. Beside the immediate terror threats from Iraq and Syria, Europe is cognisant that the Sahel is home to many growing terror groups.

Recently, some extremist groups in the Sahel region, including Ansar Dine, Katiba Macina, al-Mourabitoun and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, reinforced their standing by merging under a new banner – the Jamâ'ah Nusrah al-Islâm wal-Muslimîn (Group for the support of Islam and Muslims). Led by Iyad Ag Ghaly, the group has claimed various attacks since its formation and has sparked fears of an all-out onslaught in the Sahel and beyond. Mali's neighbour Burkina Faso, for instance, has experienced over 20 terror attacks since April 2015.

Joint counter-terrorism in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin

The emergence of terrorist groups in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin has been met with a strong regional response from West African countries. The

PSC Chairperson

H.E. Susan Sikaneta

Ambassador of Zambia to Ethiopia and its Permanent Representative to the AU

Current members of the PSC

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

G5 Sahel group was formed to take the lead on a regional approach to the extremist threat in the Sahel. The Lake Chad Basin Commission countries plus Benin have orchestrated efforts to tackle Boko Haram, forming the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to head their military efforts.

The AU can complement these military initiatives by urging all its member states to focus on the many longer-term governance and human rights issues that drive people to join such movements. In the foreseeable future, the AU will continue to rely on regional coalitions to address terror threats in Africa while it provides legitimacy and support to the missions.

The AU will continue to rely on regional coalitions to address terror threats in Africa

The Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) office in Dakar, which has been working on the terrorist threats in the Sahel and the West African region, emphasised that 'the AU should urge its member states to tackle the insecurities at various political, social and economic levels that nudge people to extremism'.

Martin Ewi, Senior Researcher at the ISS, urged the Peace and Security Council (PSC) 'to speedily operationalise the African List of Terrorist Individuals and Organisations as provided in the 2002 Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa'.

He added, 'The list should proscribe terror groups in the region and call on every country on the continent and beyond to cooperate in denying territorial space, financial and other vital resources that sustain the terror groups.'

State building in Somalia

Somalia is another crisis area that requires the concerted efforts of the AU and its partners. Despite the security gains made against al-Shabaab and the recent electoral milestones, many state institutions in Somalia remain weak. While momentum grows to regain territory and further weaken al-Shabaab, the state still lacks the capacity to fill the governance vacuum in the recovered regions.

'The AU should work closely with its partners to build state institutions to manage recovered areas, provide public services and win people over,' said Meressa Kahsu, Senior Researcher and Training Coordinator at the ISS. The international community should also provide the necessary financial and logistical support to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali Army to provide a stable security environment for the state-building initiative to succeed.

This requires world leaders to honour the pledges made at the London Conference on 11 May, including the agreements for a New Partnership for

50 million euros

EUROPEAN FUNDING
FOR THE G5 SAHEL

Somalia and a Security Pact for Somalia's stabilisation. More should also be done to address the cholera epidemic and the drought, which have claimed many lives.

The AU should play a leading role in getting world leaders to support the government of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmajo' to make peace and development a reality for Somalis.

Peacebuilding in South Sudan

What is the fate of the August 2015 peace deal in South Sudan? And why is there an apparent international silence on the implementation of the agreement? These are some of the recurring questions in the South Sudan crisis.

Time is more than ripe for the establishment of a hybrid court and a truth and reconciliation commission

The peace agreement started to unravel in July 2016 when violence erupted between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and Vice-President Riek Machar, who are the major signatories to the deal. The renewed violence came barely three months after the formation of the transitional government of national unity in April. Machar went into exile and was replaced by Tabang Deng as the first vice president. But high levels of violence continue across the country, and South Sudan remains in the midst of an acute political, economic and humanitarian crisis.

In December 2016 Kiir announced the commencement of national dialogues in the country, but this has been criticised as an effort to deflect attention from the government's obligation to implement the 2015 peace deal. Time is more than ripe for the establishment of a hybrid court and a truth and reconciliation commission, as stipulated by the agreement. But these have been stalled by the ongoing clashes and the uncertainties over Machar's exile and future role in the country.

At its last summit in January 2017, the AU called for the implementation of the 2015 peace deal, but there is no momentum in getting the South Sudanese government to adhere to it.

Amanda Lucey, Senior Researcher at the ISS, maintained that the 'AU, IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development], UN and other partners should leverage on a united front to put an end to the ongoing violence and revive discussions on securing lasting peace in the region'.

Crisis in the DRC

The political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as a result of the delay in elections remains unresolved. The AU-mediated political agreement reached in October 2016 was not inclusive enough, with most major political parties having boycotted the process. Most political parties joined a second round of talks under the mediation of the Catholic Church, which is seen as a neutral and credible mediator.

On December 31 all parties signed an agreement that provides for the formation of a transitional government, led by a prime minister from the main opposition grouping, and for elections to be held in 2017. The accord also says that President Joseph Kabila cannot stand for an additional term.

Hailed as a sound roadmap for a transition period leading to national elections, implementation of the accord has since been undermined by drawn-out disagreements over the composition of the government and the designation of the prime minister. The Kabila government's unilateral appointment of a prime minister from a co-opted branch of the opposition has left the agreement in tatters and the situation more polarised than ever.

The Kabila government's unilateral appointment of a prime minister has left the agreement in tatters

The UN and numerous other countries have called upon the parties to adhere to the terms of the December 31 accord, but SADC and the ICGLR have remained silent. Stephanie Wolters, the head of the Peace and Security Research programme at the ISS, said that the AU 'should raise its voice and call on the Kabila government to apply the December 31 accords in spirit and in letter,

including by allowing the opposition to nominate the prime minister. The current government lacks the legitimacy to stabilise the volatile situation and the credibility to lead the country to elections, and the crisis will only deepen.'

At the 29th summit the AU will also be confronted with the ongoing crises in Libya, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Sudan and Guinea-Bissau.

What is key at the two-day summit is whether the AU Assembly will equip the PSC and the AU Commission with the necessary mandates to take concrete actions to mitigate these conflicts.



On the Agenda

What can be expected from Moussa Faki Mahamat's first summit?

The 29th AU summit will be the first under the new commission elected in January and led by Moussa Faki Mahamat. Heads of state and government are expected to take critical decisions that will shape the future of the AU as the main driver for integration on the continent. The reform of the organisation, the modalities of its funding and the free movement of people on the continent are the main areas where decisions are expected.

In January 2017 the AU Assembly adopted the report proposed by the special commission chaired by Rwandan President Paul Kagame on reforming the pan-African body.

The AU Assembly took note of the following recommendations:

- Focus on key priorities with a continental scope, such as political, peace and security issues, economic integration and Africa's global representation and voice
- Realign AU institutions in order to deliver on these priorities
- Connect the AU to its citizens
- Manage the business of the AU efficiently and effectively at both political and operational levels
- Finance the AU sustainably and with the full ownership of member states

After the summit, members of the Kagame commission continued consultations with the AU Commission (AUC), AU Chair Alpha Condé and former AU chair Idriss Déby. A meeting on the proposed reforms took place in early May in Kigali.

The new AUC chair has presented a progress report on the implementation of the reforms.

- The AUC has launched the process to select an international auditing company to assess the institution and identify bottlenecks
- The AUC has held a retreat to assess the state of affairs within the organisation
- The implementation unit located in the office of the AUC chair is supposed to be set up before the July summit

2018

DEADLINE TO IMPLEMENT
THE IMPORT LEVY

In line with the decision taken in January, at the upcoming summit there will only be three issues on the assembly's agenda: the report on the implementation of the reforms, the AU budget and peace and security issues.

In addition, it will be necessary to decide on the bureaucratic implications of focusing the AU on fewer key priorities. For example, does this imply that the number of departments and commissioners will be reduced?

It will be necessary to decide on the bureaucratic implications of focusing the AU on fewer key priorities

The establishment of the reform implementation unit, its full operationalisation, and its effectiveness will depend on the mandate it receives from the heads of state and government regarding the scope of the changes to be put in place. So far, the reform process has been driven by Kagame, Condé and Déby. The meeting of foreign ministers in Kigali to promote exchanges among member states on the proposed reforms has contributed to this engagement.

This methodical and sustained approach has prevented the process from being rushed, which could have undermined the quality and uptake of the reforms. Looking at the steps presented by the AUC chair, it is more than likely that this will be a long-term process spanning most of his four-year term.

New funding mechanism linked to the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area

Almost one year on, the modalities of implementing the new AU financing model (a levy of 0.2% on non-African imports) are yet to be fully decided. This year was supposed to be a transition year before full implementation in 2018. So far, however, few member states have put in place a levy in order to fund their AU contributions. The issue of the new levy's compliance with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) regulations has often been raised as well. In Kigali, Donald Kaberuka – the AU High Representative for the Peace

Fund – hinted that the fate of the 0.2% import levy is linked to the speedy establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), which could deflect the challenge of WTO compliance. It is still not known if AU member states will be able to reach agreement on the CFTA in order to allow the full implementation of the levy by 2018.

In search of consensus on free movement

At its 27th summit in Kigali, the AU asked the AU Commission to put in place an implementation roadmap for the development of a protocol on the free movement of persons in Africa by January 2018.

Since February, African experts have been negotiating the protocol on 'free movement, the right of residence, [and] the right of establishment' – first in Accra in March, then in Kigali in May – to be presented for consideration at the AU Assembly. However, it is not yet certain that the issue will indeed be on the agenda.

The various negotiation rounds have attempted to find a balance between the enthusiasm and experience of regions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) in establishing the free movement of people, and the concerns related to security, social and economic issues that have been raised by many other member states.

States can still invoke their internal regulations to deny entry and residence to Africans from other countries

So far, progress has been made towards consensus on three principles: phasing-in the protocol on free movement; recognising the sovereignty of member states; and allowing flexibility.

Firstly, the protocol on free movement will have three phases: first the right of entry; then the right of residence; and finally the right of establishment. This phasing-in is similar to the method used by ECOWAS.

Secondly, while the rights of entry, residence and establishment without discrimination are recognised,

recognition depends on the laws and regulations of the host state. This means that member states can still invoke their internal regulations to deny entry, residence and establishment to Africans from other countries. Therefore African citizens travelling to more reluctant states would still have to meet the requirements of the host's immigration services.

Thirdly, the negotiated protocol is recognised only as a stepping stone in continental efforts towards free movement in Africa. Regions or member states can decide to go further than the provisions of the protocol in removing barriers to free movement. This flexibility would allow more willing regions or member states to remain unaffected by the reservations of reluctant parties.

The main challenge, besides the adoption and ratification of the protocol, is the establishment of a mechanism to verify that member states meet their obligations under this protocol. The latitude given to member states to continue to apply their own immigration laws and policies could lead to its selective application.

The negotiated protocol is recognised only as a stepping stone in continental efforts towards free movement in Africa

Moreover, the fact that provisions related to free movement might differ from one region to another, coupled with the adoption of the AU protocol, could present a challenge for member states at the legal and administrative level. In this regard, heads of state and government would have to clarify the hierarchy among various norms.

Lastly, a major question is the ability of member states to agree on an implementation roadmap with benchmarks and a comprehensive and binding timeline on the harmonisation of travel documents and immigration processes. The risk is that the AU adopts a symbolic protocol on free movement that is undermined by member states' uneven commitment. Even if the AU Assembly were to adopt the protocol, every state would need to sign and ratify it if they wanted it to enter in force in their territory. As the protocol would be binding only for signatories, a low number of signatures and ratifications – especially by regional powers – could hamper the dynamic towards the continental free movement of people.

Besides the commitment of member states, the question is if the security context on the continent is conducive to the free movement of people. Various conflict situations have arisen because of the inability of some states to effectively control their borders. Member states will have to simultaneously strengthen their border control while ensuring the rights of African citizens to enter and reside in the country of their choice.

Situation Analysis

Angola grapples with its DRC foreign policy problem



Congolese foreign minister Léonard She Okitundu recently toured the continent in an attempt to rally African leaders' support for the current political arrangement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This arrangement is one that disrespects key aspects of the 31 December political accord, and has been resoundingly rejected by the political opposition.

Angola was the last stop on Okitundu's tour, but undoubtedly the most important. For two decades, what's happened in the DRC has been at the top of Angola's foreign policy priorities. It has played a pivotal role in supporting first Laurent Kabila and then his son and current president, Joseph, since Mobutu Sese Seko was ousted 20 years ago.

That Angola's defence minister João Lourenço – President José Eduardo dos Santos' chosen successor – was signing a bilateral military cooperation accord with the United States on the sidelines of the International Contact Group meeting on the DRC while Okitundu was in Luanda, should give the Congolese government pause.

For two decades, what's happened in the DRC has been at the top of Angola's foreign policy priorities

Everyone in the DRC knows that Angola has a key role in how the current political crisis in the DRC plays out.

It was Angola that nudged Kabila back to the negotiating table after it judged that the AU-brokered political agreement from October 2016 wasn't enough to restore stability to its giant neighbour. This was an agreement that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) had both endorsed. And it's Angola that has told Kabila it is time for him to hand over power.

Angola has grown tired of Kabila's inability to find – or adhere to – a political agreement that restores stability in the DRC.

Stability and political ties

Driving the relationship from Angola's point of view are two strategic issues: stability in the DRC, with whom Angola shares 2 646km of border and significant offshore oil deposits; and a political ally Luanda can rely

2 646km

THE BORDER BETWEEN
ANGOLA AND THE DRC

on not to support its armed enemies. These days this means the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) rebels fighting for the independence of Angola's Cabinda province, which accounts for half the country's oil production.

Until Laurent Kabila came to power, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) had to contend with Mobutu's staunch support of its foe, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Ensuring that whoever is the DRC's president is also onside with MPLA interests has been one of the cornerstones of Luanda's policy towards the DRC.

Laurent Kabila and his son Joseph both frequently relied on Angola's military support – notably during the 1998 war with Rwanda and Uganda and their domestic proxies, when Angola (and Zimbabwe and Namibia) had thousands of troops in the DRC for five years; and even during electoral violence in 2006.

More recently Angola has played a role in protecting Kabila's personal security and providing training for the Congolese military. Joseph Kabila knows that Angolan support can make or break a Congolese president.

Ensuring that whoever is the DRC's president is also onside with MPLA interests has been one of the cornerstones of Luanda's policy

Refugees from Kasai introduce a new element

The deteriorating situation in the Kasai region of the DRC – where fighting between the Congolese army and militias loyal to the late chief Kamwina Nsapu has displaced over 1.3 million people – has introduced a new element into the relationship between the two countries.

The area borders on Angola, and recent estimates indicate that over 25 000 Congolese refugees have fled into the country. They are concentrated in the Lunda Norte region, where there is already a history of hostile relations between Angolan security forces and Congolese immigrants.

Angolan authorities have expressed concern over the impact that an influx of Congolese refugees may have on their upcoming elections in August this year.

The possible spillover of the fighting is a development that Angola will do everything in its power to contain, knowing that the Congolese army can't be relied on to secure the border or contain the spread of the violence. Angola has deployed troops to the border, and some analysts believe they have already entered Congolese territory.

At the end of May the Angolan government issued a rare public statement on the DRC, calling on the government and all political forces to put an immediate end to political violence and extremist actions and start a 'serious

25 000

CONGOLESE REFUGEES IN ANGOLA

and constructive dialogue ... that will lead to a return of peace and stability'.

A few days later Angolan foreign minister Georges Chicoti told Radio France Internationale that there were militiamen and Congolese soldiers among those who had crossed into Angola.

But what are Angola's options if Kabila persists with election delays and doesn't bow to pressure to step down?

AU firm on unconstitutional changes of power

If there is one principle that the AU won't allow to be violated, it's that on unconstitutional changes of power. Angola has historically played by its own rules when it comes to foreign policy in Central Africa. But would it choose a military option that would attract criticism not only from the international community but also from African heads of state, especially in SADC? That is the last thing Angola wants as it prepares its first post-war leadership change.

Perhaps a less obvious role is an option?

Angola's participation in the International Contact Group meeting on the Great Lakes in the US in mid-May, and its leadership of the UN Security Council visit to the DRC some months ago, could indicate that it intends to couple its traditionally bilateral engagement with the DRC with a multilateral approach.

Angola has historically played by its own rules when it comes to foreign policy in Central Africa

Although Angola's interests in stability in the DRC may have different motivations, for now they overlap with broader concerns about finding a peaceful way out of the Congolese political crisis.

This provides a significant opportunity for cooperation between one of Africa's most powerful states and the broader international community, including through organisations like SADC.



Addis Insight

Cautious PSC decision-making focuses on ongoing crises

At a retreat held in early May this year in Kigali, the PSC vowed to improve both the implementation of its decisions and its working methods. A retrospective of its work last year reveals that the council adopted fewer decisions in 2016 than in 2015. In the aftermath of the decision in January 2016 not to send a mission to Burundi, ambassadors on the council failed to take a strong stand on individual crises. This attitude also reflects the structural problems within the PSC.

According to a *PSC Report* analysis of PSC meetings and decisions in 2016, conflict situations constituted 40% of the agenda items of PSC meetings (see Figure 1) and 59% of the statements it adopted in 2016 (Figure 2). Most of the crises discussed by the PSC were ongoing situations, such as those in South Sudan, Libya, Somalia and the Central African Republic (Figure 3). In 2016 the PSC held no meetings on potential or emerging crises.

In 2016 the PSC held no meetings on potential or emerging crises

Fewer decisions by the PSC in 2016

While conflict situations inform the bulk of PSC meetings and statements, the number of decisions taken by the body is relatively low. An analysis of the wording of its communiqués and press statements reveals that the word ‘decides’ is seldom used. In 2016 only 13 statements included this word (see Figure 6), down from 20 in 2015. (The expression ‘decides to remain seized of the subject’ was not included in this figure.)

Five of these decisions were about renewing the mandates of various missions (the African Union [AU] Mission in Somalia; the AU–United Nations [UN] Hybrid Mission in Darfur; and the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram). A large chunk of the PSC’s work is also devoted to its relationship with the UN (see Figure 4).

The PSC also made fewer statements in 2016 when compared to 2015 (Figure 5).

Subsidiarity is the norm

Two other trends emerge from this data. Firstly, the principle of subsidiarity seems to be the norm. An overview of the ongoing crises on the continent

reveals that the AU is often not the main actor. This role is mostly played by the regional economic communities (RECs). The only exception is Somalia, and even here the influence of the troop/police-contributing countries may at times be greater than that of the PSC. In South Sudan, the Lake Chad Basin and Burundi, RECs and regional mechanisms are the main actors. The PSC merely validates their decisions.

Secondly, despite the fact that the PSC protocol clearly establishes prevention as an objective, the PSC does not seem to address emerging crises. This trend grew in 2016, following the reversal of the PSC's December 2015 decision to send a protection force to Burundi. The PSC ambassadors' decision on Burundi was overridden by the heads of state at their summit in January 2016.

Thus, while it can be said that the Burundi incident had an influence on the rather weak decision-making by the PSC in 2016, the problem is also structural. What happened in January 2016 exacerbated a deeper problem facing the PSC, namely the centralisation of decision-making on foreign affairs issues in the presidencies of most African states.

Figure 1: PSC meetings in 2016

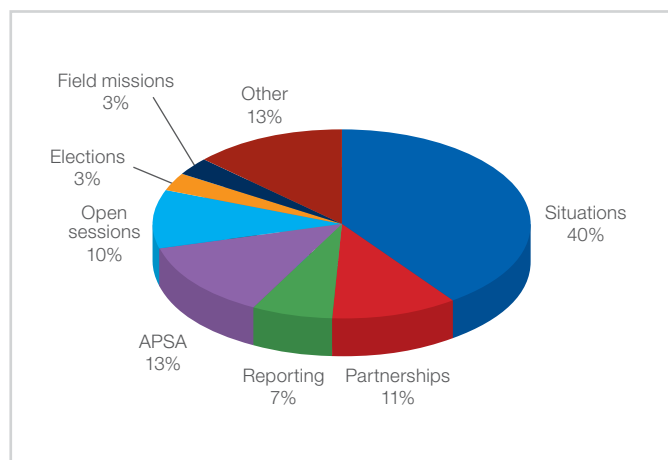


Figure 2: Themes covered by the PSC statements in 2016

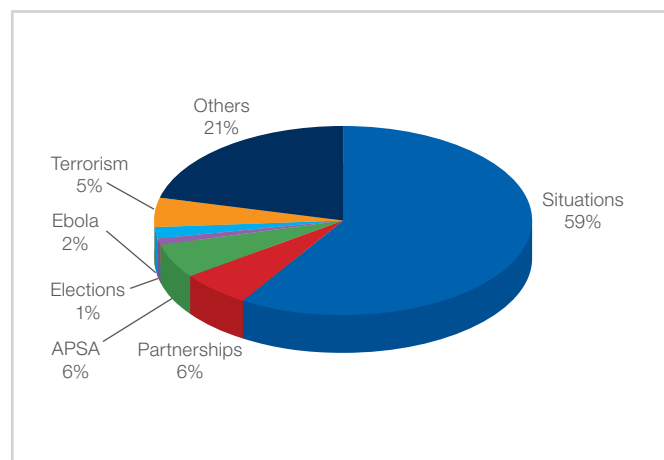


Figure 3: PSC meetings on crisis situations in 2016

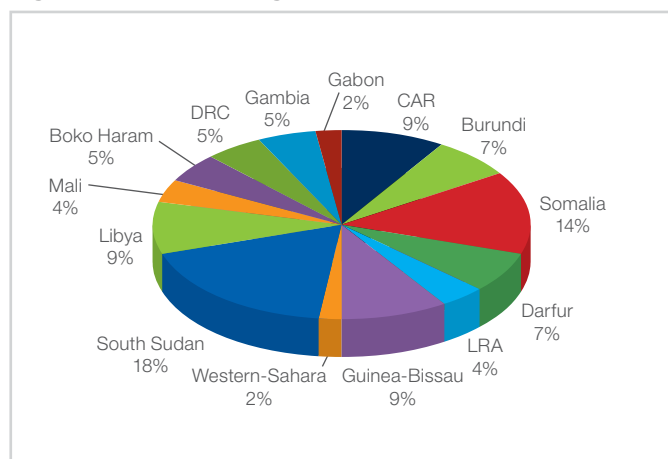


Figure 4: PSC 'decisions' in 2016

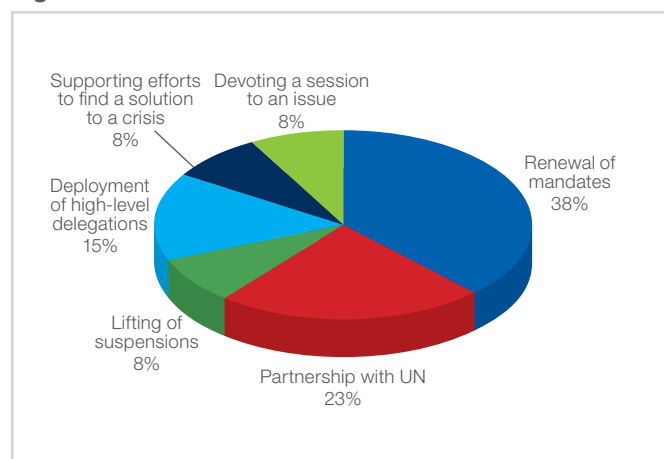


Figure 5: Themes of PSC statements in 2015 and 2016

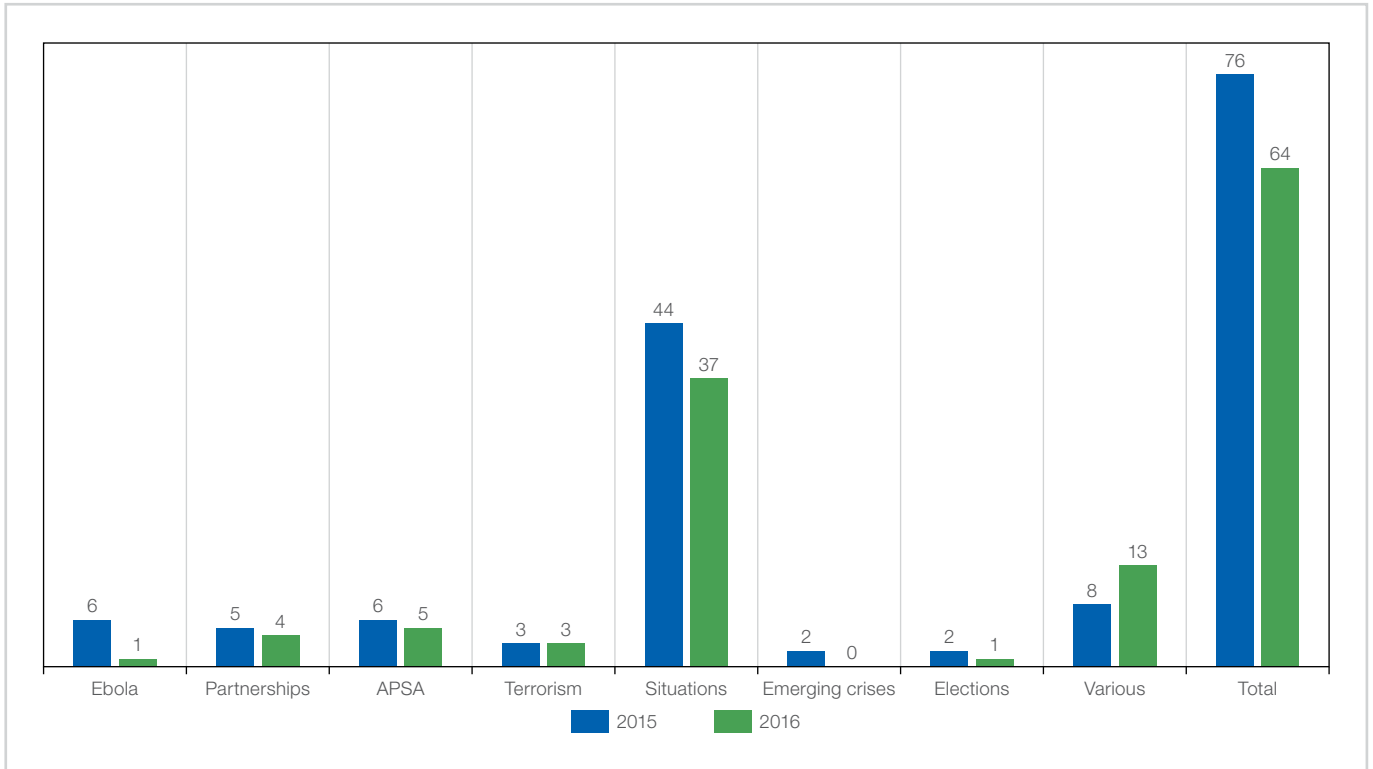
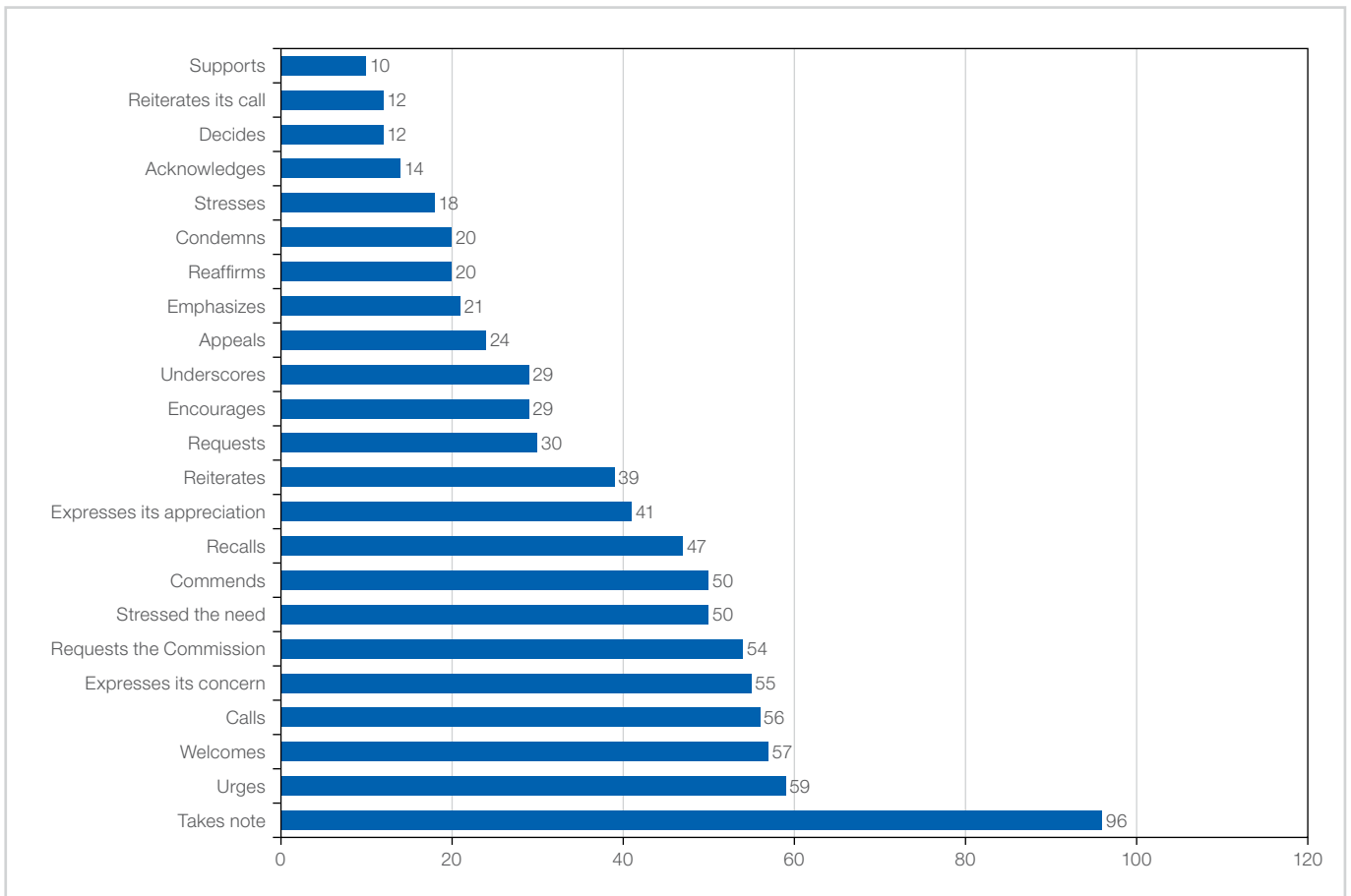


Figure 6: The wording of PSC decisions



Addis Insight

What is holding the African Standby Force back?



The PSC held a meeting to discuss the African Standby Force (ASF) in April this year amid growing scepticism around the actual deployment of the mechanism. The AU has been called upon to intervene in various crises, but instead of deploying the ASF it has opted for ad hoc arrangements. Experts believe that the ASF doctrine should be reviewed in line with current developments on the continent. The doctrine should take shifting regional alliances into account, and the debate over the desirability of the African Capacity for Rapid Intervention in Crises (ACIRC) should be put to rest once and for all.

Last year the ASF was declared fully operational and ready for deployment. This was after the AMANI Africa II field training exercise that took place in South Africa in October and November 2015. The AU Commission also developed a five-year work plan for the ASF in late 2016.

So what is keeping the AU from deploying the ASF in the many crises and conflicts on the continent?

Policy experts are concerned that the six scenarios for deployment are outdated

Many policy experts maintain that the ASF framework, which was developed 14 years ago, must be reviewed to meet current realities if the AU is serious about deploying the mechanism. Indeed, the AU Peace Operations Support Division (PSOD) has started discussions on reviewing the ASF doctrine and enhancing its deployment capabilities.

There are also well-documented challenges in terms of funding and a lack of political will, which in many cases hamper the AU's interventions.

What needs to be reviewed?

Issues with the scenarios for deployment

Policy experts are concerned that the six scenarios* for ASF deployment are outdated. These scenarios range from military advisory missions to peacekeeping and intervention operations. Current AU practice shows that these categories do not reflect reality, and often two or more of the prescribed scenarios are involved in AU operations.

The AU's peace operations in Somalia, Sudan, the Central African Republic and Mali, for example, all fall under scenarios 4 and 5 of the ASF framework. These missions went beyond traditional peacekeeping operations (scenario 4) aimed at deterring violence and took on proactive stance, whereby attacks were launched on sophisticated armed groups that posed a significant threat to the peace process.

In the case of Somalia, the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) took on various stabilisation roles to restore and expand state authority to areas that had been under the control of al-Shabaab.

Some experts have lauded the AU for its adaptability in volatile situations, such as that in Somalia, where the UN is unwilling to deploy until a comprehensive agreement is reached. Others hold that the lack of clear strategic guidance on the scope of AU peace operations threatens the efficiency and impartiality of AU missions.

The AU needs a clear doctrine and policy framework on peace support operations

If the scenarios were revised, this would also provide updated contexts on how the ASF tool could respond to different conflicts and humanitarian crises.

Riana Paneras, senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies' office in Addis Ababa, argues that 'it is necessary to revise the ASF doctrine, but the AU also needs a clear doctrine and policy framework on peace support operations. It is unfortunate that the ASF became an end in itself and the main focus in all [the] training and plans of the PSOD, whereas the ASF is actually only a tool to be used for peace operations on the continent, whether in conflict areas or for other emergencies, such as the Ebola crisis or other disasters.'

Lack of clarity in deploying regional standby forces

The ASF was designed to consist of uniformly trained standby forces in the five regions of Africa – North, East, Central, West and South. However, there is a lack of clarity on whether each of the regional standby forces will be deployed as a coherent entity, as the ASF doctrine suggests.

Some policy experts argue that it will be difficult to deploy the standby forces in a uniform manner. Lessons from African peace efforts show that each conflict has its own unique set of interested parties and capacities, which may not be limited to the regional arrangement at any given time.

In the AU's missions in Burundi (AMIB, 2003), Sudan (UNAMID) and Somalia (AMISOM) it has relied on troops from capable and willing member states rather than a solely regional arrangement. In Somalia the involvement of regional actors such as Kenya and Ethiopia is sometimes seen as a hurdle to

14

MEMBER STATES OF ACIRC

the peace process. In Mali the mission had a strong regional component but it took too long to deploy at the end of 2012, when time was of the essence. This was owing to troop-contributing countries' lack of capacity.

Towards rapid deployment

Concerns about deploying a regional standby force become more apparent in cases where there is a need for rapid deployment. The ASF is expected to be deployed within 14 days in emergencies featuring war crimes, genocide and gross human rights abuses. But it will be difficult to ensure rapid deployment in cases where members of a regional standby arrangement are incapable and/or unwilling to deploy.

Cedric de Coning, a senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, maintains that Africa's capacity to deploy rapidly resides at the national level, not at the regional level. He argues that while there is a need for a pre-identified, trained and verified regional standby force, rapid deployment should be based on the capacity, willingness and readiness of individual states to deploy to a given conflict on the continent.

Lessons from ACIRC

ACIRC was formed in 2013 to provide an interim arrangement for a coalition of capable member states to deploy rapidly across the continent when authorised by the PSC.

Although it has not been deployed yet, ACIRC draws from the commitments of its 14 voluntary member states. The mechanism is meant to circumvent reliance on the long-awaited regional arrangements, but its limited membership affects its ability to deploy.

ACIRC was formed to provide an interim arrangement for a coalition of capable member states

Some members of the PSC – and the AU Assembly – consider ACIRC a parallel structure that detracts attention from the ASF. According to reports, in early 2015 Nigeria rejected South Africa's offer to put ACIRC to use in the fight against Boko Haram. The fact that the PSC is responsible for authorising ACIRC also means that some PSC members could block its authorisation.

Additionally, the willingness and interests of ACIRC's 14 member states are determining factors in its deployment. Notably, when the terrorist threat in Mali and the Sahel region became troublesome, ACIRC did not come up for deployment despite various AU-led discussions to establish an African force in the region. Rather, the concerned leaders of the G5 Sahel established a joint mission early this year. Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, which are members of the G5 Sahel (together with Mali and Mauritania), also belong to ACIRC.

Within 14 days

DEPLOYMENT OF THE ASF
IN EMERGENCIES

Some experts hold that the ASF mechanism – which has the buy-in of all African states – should be equipped with a flexible framework to enable a coalition of willing members to intervene, like ACIRC.

The command and control of the ASF

In addition, there is not enough clarity on whether the five standby forces can be mandated by their regional economic communities (RECs).

Currently, the PSC is the highest decision-making body in terms of authorising the ASF, while the standby forces come from the five regions, overseen by the RECs.

Experts insist on the primary role of the PSC in mandating peace operations

Although the AU insists on its primary responsibility for peace and security in Africa, events such as the Economic Community of West African States' deployment to The Gambia early this year show that RECs may choose to establish a mission and deploy troops before getting the explicit approval of the PSC. This reduces delays and enhances rapid response, but it also weakens the role of the PSC in coordinating peace and security on the continent.

Several experts insist on the primary role of the PSC in mandating peace operations, given that conflict occurrences have effects that go beyond the relevant subregion.

In the coming months a huge task lies ahead of the AU and its partners to ensure that the ASF can in fact be deployed to provide solutions to Africa's crises. This requires long-term considerations that provide for a pragmatic approach and at the same time foster unity and consensus among AU member states and Africa's subregions.

*ASF deployment scenarios include:

	ASF mission scenarios
Scenario 1	AU/regional military advice to a political mission
Scenario 2	AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with UN mission
Scenario 3	Stand-alone AU/regional observer mission
Scenario 4	AU/regional peacekeeping force (PKF) for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions
Scenario 5	AU PKF for complex multidimensional peacekeeping mission, low-level spoilers (a feature of many current conflicts)
Scenario 6	AU intervention – e.g. genocide situations where international community does not act promptly

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