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Looking ahead to a future amidst global uncertainty, 2023 held great significance for the African Union, particularly in acknowledging the invaluable efforts of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department. This department has been instrumental in promoting and maintaining peace, stability, and security across Africa, as evidenced by its successful interventions across the continent, despite various obstacles, constraints and an international complex conjuncture.

The first edition of the Conflict Management Annual Digest showcases the substantial progress and contributions made by the African Union Commission (AUC) in realising our continent’s aspirations. These advancements align with the AU’s broader strategic priorities outlined in Agenda 2063, paving the way for continued growth and development.

In the face of challenges that have impeded peace and stability, the African Union has embraced this unique opportunity to fortify its resolve in addressing these issues. By encouraging inclusive governance, strengthening institutions, and fostering tolerance and reconciliation, we aim to create a strong foundation for sustainable peace across Africa.

The AU’s commitment to Silencing the Guns has yielded significant results, with positive breakthroughs achieved in Ethiopia and substantial contributions to peace and reconciliation efforts in the Central African Republic, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and support for the transition in Somalia. Some significant progress has been achieved in the preparation for the Reconciliation Conference in Libya, where difficulties arose at the last moments. These accomplishments stem from the organisation’s ability to enhance early warning systems and deliver effective response options for the Peace and Security Council and other decision-making organs within the African Union and its Member States. The celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Council will provide an opportunity to reflect on and tackle the serious obstacles to our actions for peace.

The revitalisation of the AU Peace Fund has mobilised critical resources to bolster our Member States’ capacities in conflict prevention and peace support operations. The Peace Fund will be useful in regions such as the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, demonstrating the commitment necessary to overcome obstacles and establish lasting peace and sustainable development as part of the AU’s contribution to maintaining peace and security.

While we have made tangible progress, we still face structural challenges that demand sustained focus and concerted action. Our continental leadership must, therefore, continue to step up and drive these efforts forward.

Addressing unconstitutional changes of governments (UCGs) in some regions will require strengthening the capacities and the roles of the AU Peace and Security Council, the Chairperson of the Union, and the Commission. Engaging women and youth, promoting sustainable development, and fortifying strategic partnerships must remain essential components of the AU’s long-term strategy.

Given the global uncertainties and unprecedented shifts and challenges to multilateralism, we must recognise that the African Union must show more strength and adaptability in confronting emerging difficulties across the continent. The Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department will continue to play a pivotal role in meeting the need to shape Africa’s future, ensuring that the organisation stays at the forefront of efforts to maintain peace, stability and security throughout the region.

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat
Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Foreword
We are delighted to introduce the inaugural edition of the “Conflict Management Annual Digest” brought to you by the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department. This Digest provides extensive analysis of noteworthy developments, trends, and contributions by the African Union in promoting and maintaining peace, stability, and security across Africa in 2023.

Several pervading threats posed by armed conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism, transnational crime, geopolitical tensions, human rights violations, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, climate-related risks, governance issues, and human security deficits, continue to contribute to instability in various African countries. Unconstitutional changes of governments have further exacerbated the situation. It is imperative to analyse these complexities and implement comprehensive peace interventions with a focus on conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes, the Lake Chad Basin, and parts of Northern and Southern Africa.

Navigating these multifaceted political and security landscapes necessitates strong political will and institutional backbone. This includes fostering inclusive governance, building robust institutions, ensuring accountability, promoting dialogue, and encouraging tolerance and reconciliation. Strengthening collaborations among the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), the United Nations, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners is essential to support Member States in tackling the root causes of conflict and implementing their shared vision for sustainable peace, development, and prosperity in alignment with the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063 and the goals of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

The first edition of the Conflict Management Annual Digest offers valuable insights into the African Union’s peacebuilding approaches, highlighting the efforts of the AU Peace and Security Council, Chairpersons of the Union and the Commission, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, High Representatives, Envoys, Special Representatives, and the Conflict Management Directorate of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department. These collective endeavours prioritise peacebuilding initiatives, encourage inclusive development strategies, empower women and youth, and foster strategic partnerships to achieve peace dividends and ensure human security for “the Africa We Want.”

We hope that this publication will serve as an indispensable resource for policymakers, decision-makers, representatives of AU Member States, the diplomatic community, practitioners, researchers, students of international relations, and peace advocates. May it reignite the pan-African spirit and inspire innovative ideas to advance African solidarity and solutions, ultimately paving the way for a future where peace is not just an aspiration but a tangible reality for all African people.

As we share the knowledge and experiences gained from this year’s highlights, let us all continue to work for effective governance that yields peace dividends.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye
Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security
We are pleased to introduce the first edition of the Conflict Management Annual Digest, a publication that celebrates the significant contributions of the African Union Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (DPAPS) to our collective efforts at silencing the guns and building and peace and prosperous Africa. This publication aims to share the Department’s invaluable efforts in fostering peace, stability, and security across Africa.

This digest highlights key AU interventions in promoting peace, stability, and security on the African continent, including support to addressing the situations in Burkina Faso, Sudan, Niger, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Libya, Mozambique, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, and the Gulf of Guinea. The digest also emphasises the importance of cross-cutting themes such as women, youth, and children in peace and security, along with the impact of climate change on peace and security, which were critical areas of focus for the Department in 2023.

The realisation of Agenda 2063 is essential to achieving Aspiration 4, which aspires towards a “peaceful and secure Africa.” The activities carried out by the Department through the CMD reflect the unwavering commitment of the African Union (AU) to this vision. The establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in 2004 has further demonstrated the vital role of the AU in addressing and responding to emerging and current political and security situations. The interface between the PSC and other pillars of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), such as the Panel of the Wise, the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) underpins our peace-making doctrine. The AU’s relationship with RECs/RMs and African Civil Society is at the heart of that doctrine.

We invite readers to explore the engaging articles featured in this digest and join us in our commitment to intensify efforts in 2024 to support the Peace and Security Council and the AU as they continue to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa. Our collective prosperity is hinged on a peaceful and stable continent.

Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, PhD
Director of Conflict Management Directorate
The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) remained dedicated to preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa’s ever-changing peace and security landscape. In 2023, the AU PSC held 61 meetings and considered 64 agenda items, of which 24 focused on country-specific situations and six on peace support operations. These efforts highlight the PSC’s proactive approach to addressing Africa’s complex challenges and reaffirm its dedication to promoting stability and fostering sustainable peace in the region.

At the level of Heads of State and Government level, the PSC held a meeting on 17 February 2023, during the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union to discuss the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In response, the PSC decided to support the deployment and operations of the East African Community (EAC) Regional Force in the DRC. The PSC further authorized the AU Commission and the Governance Structures of the AU Peace Fund to develop plans for using the AU Peace Fund and to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to revitalise the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSCF) for the DRC and the region.
Following the outbreak of conflict in Sudan on 15 April 2023, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) promptly convened an emergency meeting on 16 April 2023. Since then, the PSC has remained actively engaged in the situation in Sudan. On 27 May 2023, a Council meeting was convened at the level of Heads of State and Government during which the African Union Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan was adopted. Ongoing efforts aim to promote dialogue among the parties involved and facilitate an inclusive, Sudanese-owned peace process.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has conducted informal consultations with member states suspended from AU activities due to unconstitutional changes of government. These consultations aim to support their return to constitutional order. The first of these consultations, which included representatives from Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan, took place on 26 April 2023. The Council subsequently conducted a field mission to Burkina Faso in July 2023 to assess the situation first-hand and engage with relevant stakeholders.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MEMBER STATES IN POLITICAL TRANSITION

26 April 2023, the AUPSC held an inaugural informal consultation with the representatives of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Sudan.

21 December 2023, the AUPSC held an informal Consultation with the representatives of Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso.

Figure 2: 2023 meetings held at the level of Heads of State and Government

Figure 3: Informal consultations with Members States in political transition
On 17 May 2023, the PSC conducted a historic consultation with H.E. Azali Assoumani, the Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Union of Comoros, regarding the state of governance, peace, and security in Africa. During the consultations, the Chairperson emphasised the importance of prioritising conflict prevention and mediation to reduce conflicts and promote peace in Africa. Additionally, the Chairperson reaffirmed his commitment to using his office and term to assist countries in conflict.

Underscoring the significance of preventive diplomacy, the PSC acknowledged and commended the concerted efforts of the African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFPLM) during its 1154th meeting held on 16 May 2023. The PSC Chairperson for May 2023 represented the Council at the AFPLM Headquarters inauguration in Abuja.

Following the Council's directives, several key documents were developed in 2023. These include the Common African Position on the Application of International Law in Cyberspace, the Draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the PSC Subcommittee on Sanctions, and the Draft Manual on Modalities for Enhancing Coordination between the PSC and the African members of the United Nations Security Council (A3). The PSC Committee of Experts also contributed to developing the Draft ToRs for the AU Ministerial Committee on Counterterrorism.
In accordance with Article 18 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC, the Council held a consultative meeting with the Pan African Parliament (PAP). Both organs agreed to regularise their interactions, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring effective synergies in promoting peace, security, and stability across Africa.

In a significant development, the PSC participated in the inaugural Ministerial and High-Level Open Session on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children in conflict situations in Africa, held in Banjul, Gambia, from 4 – 5 December 2023. Alongside the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC) and other key stakeholders, the PSC affirmed its dedication to promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of African children. This event, also known as the Banjul Process, will be held annually to serve as a continental community of practice on children in conflict situations.

In conclusion, the PSC convened its 10th High-Level Seminar (Oran Process) under the theme “Celebrating Ten Years of Progress and Cooperation: A Decade of Transformation and Innovation, Reaching New Heights Together” from 17 – 18 December 2023, in Algeria. The seminar provided an opportunity to evaluate progress made in strengthening the capacity of the A3 to more effectively promote, articulate, and defend African positions on issues affecting the continent. Key discussions included the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, the Draft UNSC Resolution on the Financing of AU Peace Support Operations, and the Draft Manual on Modalities for Coordination and Cooperation between the PSC and A3.

Figure 5: Essential documents developed through the directive of the AUPSC

Figure 6: Members of the AU PSC, the African Members of the UNSC, the African Union, the United Nations and other partners during the 10th High-Level Seminar on peace and security in Africa - Oran, Algeria, December 2023.
In 2023, the PAPS Department initiated various transformative programs rooted in preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and inclusive dialogue to enhance peace and security across Africa. The Panel of the Wise played a significant role, undertaking fact-finding and electoral preventive diplomacy missions in several countries. These missions demonstrated the Panel’s proactive approach to early intervention and conflict prevention.

The Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) continued its efforts to integrate women into peace processes. The High-Level Panel of Women Mediators convened in October 2023, emphasizing the crucial role of women in negotiating peace agreements. The event celebrated women mediators’ successes, addressed challenges, and proposed recommendations to amplify their impact on peace processes.

The operationalisation of the Network of African Youth on Conflict Prevention and Mediation (WiseYouth) during the 13th AU High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace and Security in Africa in Namibia from 21-23 October 2023, and the selection of the third Cohort of African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs) in Ethiopia from November 30 to December 7, 2023, underscores the AU’s commitment to inclusivity. These initiatives highlight the AU’s dedication to ensuring all segments of society, especially women and youth, actively participate in shaping a peaceful future.

In 2023, the Department made significant strides by engaging in various innovative approaches and partnerships. The AU’s collaboration with the governments of Senegal and Finland in organizing the Water Diplomacy Virtual Seminar showcased the potential of water diplomacy in conflict prevention and resolution. Furthermore, the 14th High-Level Retreat on Preventive Diplomacy, held in partnership with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, bolstered the AU’s preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts.

Another notable achievement was the strategic alliance between the Department, the African Union Counter Terrorism Centre (AUCTC), and the AU Mission in Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL). This partnership focused on devising non-military solutions to counter terrorism and violent extremism, emphasizing the importance of holistic security measures and community engagement, capacity-building, and regional stability through dialogue and collaboration.

The Department also prioritised policy development and institutional learning. The publication of a policy brief on stakeholder coordination in African mediation efforts reflected a strategic approach to enhancing mediation processes. The Lessons Learned Exercise from the AU-led and Ethiopian-owned peace process for the Tigray region of Ethiopia provided valuable insights into the complexities of negotiation and the significance of context-sensitive conflict resolution strategies.

In summary, the Department demonstrated a steadfast commitment to addressing conflicts and promoting peace and security across the African continent through innovative approaches, strategic partnerships, and continuous learning and adaptation.

The Department also co-convened the inaugural AU-EU Structured Dialogue on Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation. This dialogue aimed to strengthen cooperation between the AU and the European Union, setting the stage for future joint initiatives that emphasize inclusivity and collaboration in preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts.

Looking ahead, the Department will continue to advocate for a collaborative and inclusive methodology, focusing mainly on empowering local communities, women, and youth. By recognizing their essential roles in fostering peace and averting conflicts, the AU is committed to launching targeted initiatives that integrate their valuable perspectives into both policy development and practical strategies.
Established in December 2007, the African Union’s Panel of the Wise (The Panel) is a crucial component of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which is central to the African Union’s (AU) commitment to creating a future characterized by peace and prosperity. The Panel supports the AU’s efforts to address peace and security challenges by providing guidance on political situations and advising the AU Assembly, the Peace and Security Council, and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, among others.

The current (fifth) Panel consists of distinguished Africans, including: H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, the former President of Burundi, H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the former Deputy President of South Africa, H.E. Amre Moussa, former Foreign Minister of Egypt and Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; Professor Babacar Kante, former Vice-President of the Senegalese Constitutional Court, and Hon. Justice (Rtd) Effie Owuor, retired judge of the Kenyan Court of Appeal.

The Panel’s Engagements

In 2023, the Panel conducted fact-finding missions to the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, and South Sudan, as well as several electoral preventive diplomacy missions in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Comoros to ease tensions, promote democratic governance, and support peace.

Central African Republic and Chad

In March 2023, H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye and Professor Babacar Kante visited the Central African Republic (CAR) on a fact-finding mission to assess the political and security situation and evaluate the progress in implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the Luanda Roadmap for peace in the CAR. The mission informed the Panel’s report to the Peace and Security Council, emphasizing the need for dialogue, trust, and inclusivity, especially in the lead-up to local elections, to restore peace, foster reconciliation, and ensure democratic governance in the CAR. The Panel also visited Chad and engaged with the President of the Transition, other transitional authorities, political parties, and civil society organizations, among others, advocating for a transition aligned with the aspirations of the Chadian people.

The Peace and Security Council, at its 1122nd meeting, requested the Panel of the Wise to deploy a fact-finding mission to Chad supported by the AU Commission. The Panel conducted the mission from 12 to 18 March 2023, engaging with the authorities on the second phase of the political transition and the implementation of the resolutions of the Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue (DNIS) held on August 20, 2022.

Subsequently, the Panel briefed the PSC on 11 May 2023. The PSC urged the transitional authorities to ensure the timely implementation of the conclusions reached during the Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue and to facilitate the participation of all Chadian stakeholders in national political and peace processes. This inclusive approach is crucial for the drafting of a new constitution and determining the form of the state.

South Sudan

In December 2023, H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye and Lady Justice (Rtd) Effie Owuor embarked on a crucial mission to South Sudan to evaluate the progress of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), with a focus on the upcoming December 2024 elections – the first to be held since the country gained independence in 2011. During their visit, they engaged in comprehensive consultations with various...
stakeholders, including President Salva Kiir, First Vice President Riek Machar, government officials, civil society organizations, regional and international partners, and the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC).

A key aspect of their discussions pertained to the imperative of a transparent and inclusive process for drafting South Sudan’s permanent constitution, ensuring it accurately reflects the aspirations and will of its citizens. Emphasis was placed on fostering a collaborative approach encompassing all segments of South Sudanese society to foster national unity and reconciliation throughout the process.

Regarding security-related matters, particularly the delayed integration of forces stipulated in the R-ARCSS, the delegation underscored the urgent need to expedite the implementation of pending tasks. These include disarmament and reintegration initiatives, which are crucial to ensuring peaceful and secure elections in the country. Furthermore, the delegation advocated for coordinated humanitarian interventions to support internally displaced persons and refugees, enabling their participation in the electoral process and promoting social cohesion.

Demonstrating their enduring commitment to advancing peace, security, and stability in Africa, His Excellency Domitien Ndayizeye and Lady Justice Effie Owuor pledged to sustain their engagement in these contexts, diligently working to promote enduring solutions and favorable outcomes for the people of South Sudan and beyond.

The African Union (AU) has been actively involved in supporting the peace process in Ethiopia through political engagements facilitated by the Peace and Security Council and the AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism (AU-MVCM). This mechanism comprises the High-Level Panel and the Joint Committee, with operational assistance from the Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (MVCM) headquartered in Mekelle.

Established on 29 December 2022, the AU-MVCM’s primary objective is to collaborate with both the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray Peoples’ Liberation Front (TPLF) to implement the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) and promote the restoration of peace, security, and stability in the Tigray region. Through engagements in Addis Ababa and Mekelle, as well as long-range patrols (LRPs) across Tigray, the AU-MVCM has diligently monitored, verified, and ensured compliance with the COHA. These concerted efforts have notably enhanced the security landscape in the region, fostering a conducive atmosphere for post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives.
Significant strides have been made with the transfer of heavy and medium weaponry, including air force assets, from the Tigray Armed Combatants to the Ethiopian National Defense Forces. Vital services have been reinstated, facilitating the resumption of humanitarian aid deliveries. Economic operations, such as air and ground transportation, have recommenced. The education sector has experienced enhancements through the reopening of educational institutions. Moreover, the Federal Police presence has been reinstated in the region, and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has instituted the Interim Regional Administration (IRA) of Tigray for efficient governance, alongside the establishment of the National Commission for Reintegration to oversee the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process.

The Tigray people in previously inaccessible areas continue to receive relief and humanitarian aid facilitated by the MVCM. However, the presence of non-ENDF forces in some parts of the Tigray region is affecting humanitarian access and the voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Continued political commitment is critical in expediting the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process, including the work of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) and the support of the AU-MVCM.

During the 1 December 2023 Special Joint Committee meeting convened by the African Union Commission to discuss the peace process in Ethiopia, both parties reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the Permanent COHA. They also stressed the urgency of accelerating the DDR process, as well as the resettlement of IDPs. Additionally, they acknowledged the importance of initiating a political dialogue to address any unresolved issues stemming from the COHA.

To bolster the peace process, the committee proposed a strategic reflection session involving the AU High-Level Panel on Ethiopia. Emphasizing the importance of ongoing engagement with partners, they underscored the need for sustained support for the Ethiopian peace process and MVCM operations. Consequently, the committee put forth a recommendation to extend the MVCM’s mandate from 1 January to 31 December 2024.

In December 2023 the AU signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ethiopian government providing a $1,000,000 contribution from the Crisis Reserve Facility of the AU Peace Fund, to support the DDR programme under the Permanent COHA. This marks the first instance of direct financial support provided by the AU to its Member States through the AU Peace Fund.

Never impose a solution. Never enter a mediation with a preconceived solution. The solution must come from the negotiation so that the parties own the process”.

H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, 
Former President of Kenya.

Progress in the Tigray region has been facilitated by the deployment of African experts from the governments of Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, who are part of the MVCM. Support from international entities such as the United Nations and IGAD has also been instrumental. Additionally, funding from multilateral and bilateral partners including the AfDB, ICRC, the US, Norway, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, and Germany has furthered the process.

The AU High-Level Panel of Eminent Africans overseeing the Ethiopian peace process comprises H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa and former President of Nigeria, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of Kenya, and H.E. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa and a Member of the AU Panel of the Wise. The Joint Committee includes representatives from the involved parties, the AU, and IGAD.

Unfortunately, women leaders were not initially engaged, not only as followers but as decision-makers, who could have contributed to the peace process in the Tigray region. They must actively participate in the implementation of the COHA”.

H.E. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, 
Former Deputy President of South Africa and a Member of the AU Panel of the Wise.
On 15 April 2023, fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), headed by Lt. Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, following a period of increased tensions. The conflict emerged over the implementation of the Political Framework Agreement of 5 December 2022, which sought to facilitate a return to democratic civilian rule.

The conflict has led to profound humanitarian devastation, with approximately 12,000 fatalities and more than 6.3 million individuals displaced, including 1.2 million seeking refuge in neighboring nations. Reports of severe human rights abuses, such as ethnic cleansing and sexual violence, are prevalent, particularly in Darfur and other regions of Sudan. Humanitarian organizations are under attack, and essential services like healthcare and education are reportedly in jeopardy of collapse.

In response to the outbreak of violence, the African Union (AU) mobilized efforts to address the crisis and halt the conflict by coordinating regional and international initiatives to mitigate potentially conflicting mediation efforts. On April 15, 2023, the AU Commission Chairperson issued a passionate appeal to all parties involved to cease hostilities immediately. Subsequently, during its 1149th meeting on 16 April 2023, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The PSC also tasked the AU Commission Chairperson with continuing engagement with the conflicting parties to facilitate dialogue and seek a peaceful resolution to the Sudanese conflict. Following this decision, the AU Commission Chairperson convened a Special Ministerial Meeting on 20 April 2023, involving bilateral, regional, and international stakeholders which urged the Sudanese parties to agree to an immediate and unconditional humanitarian ceasefire and establish humanitarian corridors.

Following the conclusions of the Ministerial meeting, the AUC prepared a De-Escalation Plan for Sudan, which identifies all the elements for addressing the immediate impacts of the conflict, changing the trajectory, and laying the groundwork for the processes that will return Sudan to the path of transition to democratic and inclusive civilian rule. This has since been referred to as the “Expanded Mechanism on the Crisis in Sudan”, which ensures collaboration and coordination of all stakeholders, to ensure that there are no parallel or competing processes. The Expanded Mechanism is composed of the AU, IGAD, UN, the League of Arab States (LAS), the European Union (EU), the permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the African members of the UNSC (A3), Sudan’s neighbouring countries (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya and South Sudan), the countries designated by IGAD to engage the belligerents (South Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti), the Chair of the African Union, the Quad (the USA, the UK, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE), the Troika (USA, UK and Norway), Germany and Qatar.

On 27 April 2023, the Chairperson of the AU Commission appealed to the neighbouring states of Sudan and the international community to speedily extend humanitarian support to civilians fleeing the conflict in Sudan. On 6 May 2023, the Chairperson of the AU Commission reaffirmed the imperative of a ceasefire in Sudan as Saudi Arabia/US facilitated talks began in Jeddah.

Subsequently, on 11 May 2023, the AU convened a meeting with humanitarian organisations based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to discuss coordination...
of efforts regarding the Sudanese crisis and agreed to establish a Forum for regular coordination and briefing on its activities. The AU Centre for Disease Control (CDC) provided US$3 million support to the health sector in Sudan, including provisions for emergency supplies and essential drugs. The AU PRC Sub-committee on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Refugees also provided US$650,000 to supplement the contribution of the CDC.

In a related development, the Commission formulated a Roadmap for Resolving the Sudan Crisis, which received endorsement from the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 27 May 2023. The endorsement took place during a meeting chaired by H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, in his capacity as PSC Chairperson. The roadmap emphasizes key elements such as ceasefire, humanitarian aid, civilian protection, accountability, regional involvement, initiation of a credible and inclusive political process towards establishing a democratic civilian government, and establishment of a mechanism to coordinate international and regional stakeholders’ efforts to prevent parallel initiatives.

In order to overcome the limitations of past initiatives, a technical team was established by the AU and IGAD. This team has been diligently working towards organising a comprehensive political process that would involve various stakeholders such as the belligerents, political parties, armed movements, civil society actors, resistance committees, traditional leaders, women and youth groups, religious organisations, trade unions, professional and academic associations. The objective is to reach a consensus on the next steps, including the formation of a transitional government. The AU and IGAD are actively engaged with the Sudanese stakeholders, recognising the importance of a comprehensive political process that embraces inclusivity in resolving the crisis.

Additionally, the AU intensified high-level engagements including shuttle diplomacy efforts across the region. In furtherance of these efforts, the Chairperson of the Commission appointed, on 17 January 2024, Members of the High-Level Panel on the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan (HLP-Sudan), namely, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, former Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, and Ambassador Francisco Madeira, former Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) to Somalia. The mandate of the panel is to work with all Sudanese stakeholders, including women and the youth, in order to ensure an inclusive process towards the restoration of peace and stability, as well as the establishment of a civilian-led political transition. The Panel is also engaging the neighbouring countries on their efforts in implementing the AU Roadmap in the interest of peace in Sudan.
The African Union (AU) continues demonstrating its commitment to supporting the people of South Sudan and the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity in implementing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The agreement is seen as a viable path to peace, security, stability, and development in Africa's youngest nation.

The process has further seen the personal efforts of the African Union Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Peace and Security Council, and the Ad Hoc High-Level Committee on South Sudan (C5) in extending their support to reinforce the mediation efforts led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), aimed at achieving lasting peace. In December 2023, H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former President of Burundi and Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, led a delegation of the Panel to South Sudan to assess the progress, challenges, and opportunities related to the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. During the visit, the Panel emphasized the critical need for collaborative efforts and constructive dialogue, among other things.

As the country prepares to hold its first-ever general election in December 2024, the African Union, in close collaboration with IGAD and the UN within the Trilateral Mechanism framework, is supporting the South Sudanese government in its constitution-making and electoral processes. In addition, the AU Commission has deployed a DDR/SSR Expert to the AU Mission in South Sudan to contribute to the implementation of the transitional security arrangements with a view to addressing the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the country.

In 2023, the government reconstituted three institutions: the Political Parties Council, the National Elections Commission, and the National Constitutional Review Commission to facilitate the electoral process based on the extended transitional period of 24 months as agreed in 2022.

The AU Commission has reiterated its readiness to support the National Elections Commission in its preparations for the development of the election roadmap to provide support for the holding of elections in December 2024. In addition, the Commission is supporting the South Sudanese parties to fully implement the outstanding tasks of the agreement through constructive and inclusive dialogue to pave the way for the holding of peaceful, credible, and inclusive elections to end the long transition.

In January 2024, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, following up on the Panel’s visit, further engaged with the South Sudanese stakeholders in support of the electoral process. On the margins of the 37th AU Summit South Africa, the C5 Ministerial consultative meeting also reiterated its commitment to supporting the holding of elections in South Sudan in December 2024.
Since the outbreak of war in Libya in 2011, the AU has been deeply involved in addressing the country’s situation and its regional implications. It has established various mechanisms aimed at assisting Libyan parties in restoring peace, security, and stability, including initiatives for national reconciliation and the enhancement of state institutions.

Despite the persistent political turmoil in Libya, including the ongoing power struggle between the conflicting governments in the West and East, the 6+6 Commission has been actively engaged in reviewing electoral laws to facilitate constitutional and presidential elections.

Led by President Denis Sassou N’Guesso of the Republic of Congo, the AU High-Level Committee for Libya convened its inaugural preparatory session for the Inter-Libyan Reconciliation Conference from 18 to 12 January 2023, in Tripoli. Preceding this event, an African Union delegation, headed by H.E. Jean-Claude Gakosso, Foreign Minister of Congo, conducted extensive preparatory discussions across different regions of Libya. These consultations sought to garner widespread endorsement from Libya’s political and societal actors for the ongoing efforts towards national consensus.

Throughout 2023, the Preparatory Committee of the Reconciliation Conference, aided by the HLC in Libya, conducted numerous consultative sessions across various regions of Libya. These sessions were held in Benghazi (November 14-15, 2023), Sebha (December 14-15, 2023), and Zuwara (January 14-15, 2024), as part of the groundwork for the forthcoming National Reconciliation Conference among Libyan stakeholders, set for April 28, 2024, in Sirte.

Demonstrating its dedication to supporting Libyan stakeholders in their pursuit of peace, stability, reconciliation, and reconstruction, the AU is actively transitioning its Liaison Office from Tunis to Tripoli. A team conducted an assessment mission in Tunis and Tripoli from 29 July to 4 August 2023, to facilitate this relocation process. Moreover, the AU is collaborating with Libyan stakeholders to finalize the Host Country Agreement and address outstanding processes in accordance with the Assembly’s decisions.
The Great Lakes Region continues to face heightened security threats with the presence of several armed groups, including the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), compounding tensions between neighbouring states in the region, particularly between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda. This situation has led to the deployment of several bilateral and multilateral initiatives for peace in the region over the years, necessitating coordination to achieve desired results.

To ensure effective coordination among various deployments by multiple Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the African Union (AU) convened a Quadripartite Summit on Coordination and Harmonization of Peace Initiatives in the Eastern DRC in Luanda, Angola, on 27 June 2023. The summit, organized under the auspices of the AU Chairperson, H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, resulted in the adoption of a Communique and a Joint Framework. The outcomes aimed to enhance the coherence of existing peace initiatives, delineating clear responsibilities and agreed-upon timelines. Additionally, the Summit called for a gathering of Chiefs of Defence of the Quadripartite Platform to synchronize military deployments in eastern DRC. During their meeting held on 6 October 2023, in Addis Ababa, the Chiefs of Defence established modalities to coordinate deployment efforts on the ground. They also committed to regular meetings to ensure information sharing, cooperation, optimization of results, and prevention of security vacuums.

The Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework Agreement (PSCFA) for the DRC and the Region, signed on 24 February 2013, remains the foundational document for fostering sustainable peace and stability in the region. The AU continues to lend support to the Luanda and Nairobi processes, spearheaded by President Joao Lourenco of Angola and former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, respectively. Moreover, the AU provided backing to EAC operations in the region, allocating USD 2 million from the Crisis Reserve Facility of the Peace Fund.
FOSTERING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC PEACE AND RECONCILIATION AGREEMENT

The AU remains dedicated to fully implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA). In March 2023, the Panel of the Wise conducted a field mission to the CAR, engaging relevant stakeholders to advance the country’s political and security situation. This mission informed the June 2023 AU Peace and Security Council meeting, expressing concern over disagreements among CAR’s stakeholders regarding the organization of the constitutional referendum. The Council urged all concerned parties to peacefully resolve their political differences. Additionally, the Council raised concerns about the worsening humanitarian situation, requesting the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to lift the arms embargo on CAR, aiming to empower the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) to fulfill their constitutional mandate of defending and protecting the country and its citizens.

On 30 July 2023, CAR held a constitutional referendum, with the National Elections Authority validating the results on 20 August 2023. The new Constitution, promulgated by President Faustin Touadera on 30 August 2023, extends the presidential term to seven years from the previous five years. Subsequently, on 7 September 2023, the National Elections Authority announced the alignment of the Electoral Code with the new Constitution and initiated preparations for local elections in 2024.

Regarding the security sector, the focus remains on sustaining momentum in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) process, aiming to dismantle all armed groups, integrate ex-combatants into the national army, and implement social impact projects to redirect combatants towards beneficial activities for society and human security.

The AU continues to monitor the situation in CAR and engage with stakeholders to promote peace, security, and stability in the country and the subregion.
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The African continent faces escalating threats to multilateralism, including security challenges like violent extremism, terrorism, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and governance issues such as Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs) in Africa. Since 2020, the continent has witnessed eight military coups, with West Africa alone experiencing six coup d’états, attempted coups, and other socio-political tensions. This alarming trend necessitates innovative approaches to mitigate political instability in the region. Strategies include strengthening state institutions and promoting shared values like democratic governance, sustainable civic and inclusive political participation, dialogue, reconciliation, accountability, and the rule of law.

Despite these countries being sanctioned in line with African Union norms on UCGs, various PSC communiques, including those on Mali, the Republic of Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Niger, have requested the AU Commission to provide political, technical, and financial support for the restoration of constitutional order.

In collaboration with ECOWAS, the AU has intensified collective engagements and support for affected
countries like Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Niger. These efforts involve preventive diplomacy by the PSC, the AU Panel of the Wise, the AU Commission Chairperson, and other senior officials. In July 2023, the PSC conducted a solidarity visit to Burkina Faso to engage with transition authorities and stakeholders for the return to constitutional order, following a similar visit to Mali in 2021 after the coup.

Additionally, in 2023, H.E. President Azali Assoumani of Comoros and the AU Commission Chairperson conducted diplomatic and mediation initiatives, including a visit to Mali to assess the transition process’s progress, challenges, and milestones towards elections. The AU High Representative for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL), H.E. Maman Sambo Sidikou, also deployed his good offices, supporting mediation efforts and development processes in Mali and Guinea.

As part of coordinated support, the AU, ECOWAS, and partners organized the Third Transition Monitoring and Support Group for Mali in September 2022 in Togo, focusing on the transition’s progress and ways to support the country’s return to constitutional order. Similar processes are planned for Guinea and Burkina Faso. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) conducted a review mission on UCGs in Guinea, contributing to the African Governance Report presented to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

Currently, the AU Commission, through the Emergency Response Mechanism, is providing support, primarily to Mali and Burkina Faso, in preventive diplomacy, countering youth radicalization, capacity development, stabilization, and local community initiatives, particularly in the Liptako-Gourma region bordering Mali, Guinea, and Niger.
In line with the ongoing efforts to advance the Silencing the Guns Agenda in Africa by 2030, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas as the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, on 17 January 2023. His role encompasses advocacy, mediation, facilitation and preventive diplomacy to galvanize support towards ending violence and sustaining peace on the continent. The appointment is pursuant to the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration of Heads of State and Government on 25 May 2013, expressing their “…determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide”. To this end, the African Union continues to promote the Silencing the Guns flagship program of Agenda 2063 that also promotes a culture of peace and tolerance among Africa’s children and youth through peace education among others.

Since his appointment, the High-Level Representative on Silencing the Guns (StG) has undertaken several advocacy and awareness raising campaigns for the implementation of the African Union (AU)Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns. In 2023, he held consultations with stakeholders, including member states, regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs), civil society organisations (CSOs) etc. These efforts aim at mobilizing diverse actors to ensure the domestication of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns, to assess the progress made and foster innovative approaches to end conflict and build lasting peace in Africa. In this light, the High Representative held a high-level engagement with the ECOWAS leadership in Abuja, Nigeria, on 10 May 2023, in which the High Representative and the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Commission agreed to strengthen collaboration between the AU and ECOWAS. The two leaders also agreed on the establishment of a joint coordination centre for StG Initiatives.

On early warning and conflict prevention, the High Representative for StG undertook two policy engagements with the RECs/RMs on the Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention (I-RECKE), with a focus on the “Conceptual and Operational Issues of Silencing the Guns”, while exploring ways on how to facilitate a more structured interaction between the AUC and the RECs/RMs. The second session of the AU I-RECKE meeting was held in Nairobi on 15 July 2023, at which the High Representative urged actors to reset and adapt continental and regional frameworks to promote the Silencing the Guns initiatives.

On gender mainstreaming, the High Representative for StG supported the Africa First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM) through their women and peace initiative organized in Abuja, Nigeria, on 8 May 2023. He reaffirmed his commitment to work collaboratively with the AFLPM to elevate women’s voices and participation in Africa’s peace and security efforts. The High Representative is also actively supporting the Sudan peace process and mediation efforts, as well as the transitional process in Chad. From 11 – 13 June 2023, he undertook a special mission as emissary of the AUC Chairperson to the Republic of Chad to deliver a letter containing a special message to H.E. Mahamat Idriss Deby, Transitional President of the Republic of Chad. Dr Ibn Chambas also provided support to AU efforts to address the challenges in Niger in the aftermath of the 2023 coup d’état.

As part of the AU efforts to silencing the guns, the Department launched the 2023 Africa Amnesty Month in Mozambique from 11 to 12 September,
under the theme: “Disarmament as a key opportunity for silencing the Guns”. During a PSC organized open session, the High Representative advocated for a soft approach to civilian disarmament and sensitization of communities on the negative impact of illicit small arms and light weapons. The event was attended by representatives of the Government of Mozambique, SADC, the United Nations, Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) and other relevant national stakeholders, including civil society and youth and women organizations among others. The AUC StG through the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) also mobilised a range of CSOs for the Africa Amnesty Month and convened an E-Symposium under the banner “Foreign Fighters and Mercenaries: Implications for Silencing the Guns in Africa”.

The AU Continental Early Warning System is crucial to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It aims to monitor and provide data-driven analyses of African governance, political, and security developments. This information guides decision-making and interventions by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU leadership to support member states in their pursuit of peace, security, and stability.

The CEWS has successfully conducted capacity-building training in member states such as Sierra Leone, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Somalia, on utilizing AU data collection and analysis tools to strengthen national early warning and peace infrastructures. These customized tools are designed to effectively influence early warning and early response at the national level.

Additionally, CEWS has maintained its support for the RECs/RMs in utilizing the data collection and analysis tools developed by the AU. This partnership was further highlighted during the 27th Technical Meeting organized by the CMD between AU CEWS and RECs/RMs in Mombasa, Kenya. The importance of interconnected early warning systems was emphasized, along with a commitment to strengthening collaboration, reinstating bi-annual technical meetings, and identifying platforms for joint dissemination of early warning reports. Notably, AU-CEWS facilitated the provision of essential ICT equipment in Zambia and Sierra Leone through support from GIZ, and collaborative reporting between AU-CEWS and the RECs continues.

In 2023, CEWS advanced its mission to aid member states in structural conflict prevention by nearing completion of the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) for Zambia. Additionally, on October 9, 2023, Malawi sought AU Commission assistance for its own CSVRA self-assessment.
The Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), as the African Union continental planning element is responsible for, managing, sustaining and liquidating AU peace support operations (PSOs). The Division continues to support the AMISOM/ATMIS in Somalia, the Quadripartite Mechanism in the Eastern DRC and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin area.

In the delivery of its functions, the PSOD provides day-to-day support to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), formerly the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It facilitated the ATMIS drawdown of 5,000 troops from Somalia in two phases and enhanced the Federal Government of Somalia’s (FGS) capabilities to progressively take ownership of the country’s security responsibilities and lead its stabilisation. Lessons from the first two drawdown phases have been essential in defining the third phase drawdown of 4,000 troops to be effected by 30 June 2024.

The AU has also been actively involved in efforts with the FGS to prepare Somalia for the post-ATMIS phase, following the total withdrawal of the mission on 31 December 2024. The AU, the FGS and other partners co-hosted the Somalia Security Conference held on 12 December 2023 in New York, USA. The Somalia Security Conference considered specific modalities for a post-ATMIS security engagement in Somalia beginning January 2025 including the FGS’ assuming full responsibilities for security responsibilities through the establishment of capable and accountable Somali Security Forces.

With regard to the conflict in Eastern DRC, under the auspices of the African Union, the PSOD supported the facilitation of the meeting of Chiefs of Defense of the Quadripartite members, comprising the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the concerned countries, namely the DRC and Rwanda, on coordination and harmonization of peace initiatives in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) on 4 to 5 October 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting contributed to the enhancement of the coordination and collaboration framework among the Quadripartite members to promote peace and stability in the Eastern DRC.

In the Lake Chad Basin, the PSOD accompanied the AU-authorized MNJTF mandate and endorsed its strategic CONOPs as per PSC Decisions 484 and 489 with EU funding, the AU provided additional support, aligned with the MNJTF support requirements. Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) signed between the AU, LCBC
and MNJTF troop-contributing countries (TCCs), the support includes air mobility service, command control communication and information system (C3IS) service, level III medical services, fuel to MNJTF sectors, mission subsistence allowances (to military staff officers and running costs of the MNJTF headquarters, training on human rights and international humanitarian law, and funding for civil-military activities in the form of quick impact projects within the MNJTF area of operations.

On 12 May 2023, the AU-PSOD organized the 15th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS). The STCDSS, attended by ministers of defense, chiefs of defense/security and experts, adopted the following policy documents: The memorandum of understanding between the African Union and the regional economic communities and The African Union (AU) continues to take a leading role in promoting peace and security on the continent through AU peace support operations (PSOs). These operations are often carried out in challenging political and security environments to address evolving security threats, including asymmetric warfare scenarios. In many of these scenarios, there is an increased risk of human rights violations unless the AU actively works to prevent or mitigate these risks.

Historically, the AU has made sure that its PSOs operate in compliance with all relevant international and regional legal instruments. In 2022, the AU, the EU, and the UN initiated a trilateral AUCF Project with the main objective of enhancing the AU’s capacity to ensure that its PSOs are consistently planned, managed, and conducted in compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), and conduct and discipline. To achieve its goal, the AUCF follows a three-pronged approach consisting of prevention, response, and remedial action, as formalised in the AU’s Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in PSOs, to guide the actions of the AUCF Project and other stakeholders.

In 2023, the AUCF reviewed and developed policy frameworks, including the AU Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in PSO and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the ATMIS Board of Inquiry. The AUCF also monitored the implementation of existing policies such as the AU Policy on the Selection and Screening of Personnel for PSOs, the AU Policy on Protection of Civilians in PSOs, the Policy on Conduct and Discipline in AU PSOs, and the Policy on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in AU PSOs.

The AUCF conducted various capacity development trainings for over 250 officers from troop and police contributing countries (T/PCCs), PSOs, national armed forces, and planning elements of RECs in the curricula of national training academies, Training Centres of Excellence, as well as AU human rights organs and other stakeholders across Africa, including the African Union Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Union Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Union Committee of Experts on Rights & Welfare of the Child, the AU ECOSOCC, and civil society organizations.

Additionally, the AUCF developed the Guideline for Case Management as part of efforts to establish a case management database. The AUCF Project will continue to ensure effective compliance and accountability.

ENHANCING COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN AU PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The African Union (AU) continues to take a leading role in promoting peace and security on the continent through AU peace support operations (PSOs). These operations are often carried out in challenging political and security environments to address evolving security threats, including asymmetric warfare scenarios. In many of these scenarios, there is an increased risk of human rights violations unless the AU actively works to prevent or mitigate these risks.

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The Sahelo-Sahara Region and the East Africa and in particular the Horn of Africa Region are facing the interrelated threats of terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime, affecting peace, security, stability, and governance in these regions. Various terrorist and criminal groups have established alliances with, and rely on the support of, larger terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) (Daesh), to which they pledge allegiance. They receive moral, financial, and technical support from these groups, including foreign terrorist fighters who are attracted to terrorist hotspots, as well as arms and ammunition acquired through transnational criminal networks thereby exacerbating the terrorism threat. The nexus between terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime – with debilitating social, economic, and humanitarian effects – is a major concern. This threat has been compounded by political instability and violent conflict in some of the countries of these two regions.

In response to this threat, member states continue to adopt and implement measures aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and transnational organized crime. Indeed, member states have deployed commendable efforts in dealing with the threat, but its persistence poses a grave concern. In 2013, the AU Commission established the Nouakchott Process, to facilitate the coordination of border control measures to prevent the movement of terrorist and criminal groups, and to enhance intelligence sharing to combat terrorist and criminal networks more effectively. It also aimed to respond to the proliferation of illicit arms and contraband used to finance these networks, strengthen national mechanisms and capacities, and pursue the full operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This initiative was replicated in 2015 with the establishment of the Djibouti Process in the Horn of Africa/East Africa Region.

Despite these efforts, the threat of terrorism has increased, and spread to more countries. Moreover, partly as a result of the reform process within the AU Commission, inadequate attention was paid to these two mechanisms. After a hiatus due in part to the COVID shutdown, the Commission therefore took a decision in 2023 to revive these processes, in order to ensure greater collective action in the fight against terrorism.

The rise in the scourge of terrorism has been accompanied by an alarming trend of unconstitutional change of government, in part, related to the failure of democratically elected governments to effectively counter the terrorist threat. As a result, there have been a number of unconstitutional changes of government in West Africa, as well as in East Africa and Central Africa. This has led to the suspension of these countries, as required by the AU’s legal instruments. Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger are under suspension in West Africa. Also suspended are Sudan in East Africa and Gabon in Central Africa. As countries under suspension, official relations with these governments are curtailed. Cooperation through intelligence agencies is one way in which to ensure continued engagement with these countries, providing added impetus to the need to revive the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes.

To this end the Commission, in collaboration with the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, convened a technical level meeting of intelligence services in Nouakchott, Mauritania from 5 to 7 November 2023. Participating countries were Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, and Tanzania. Related institutions and mechanisms that participated in the meeting included: the African
Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOP), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Accra Initiative, the Abuja Fusion Centre, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL) of the Sahel countries.

Participants discussed the terrorist threat facing their countries, the possible steps for joint action, with a particular focus on scaling up intelligence sharing. They also agreed on the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination with the regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for conflict prevention, management and resolution. They agreed to conduct regular meetings at various levels at least once a year bringing together the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, and the Accra Initiative, convened by the African Union Commission as the overall coordinator of these processes.

The Commission intends to convene these processes in 2024, starting initially with separate meetings for the Nouakchott and related processes in the Sahara-Sahel region, and the Djibouti and related processes in the East Africa/Horn of Africa region. These will culminate in a high-level meeting towards the end of the year.

The African Union (AU) intensified its efforts to address the intersection of climate change, peace, and security. Extensive consultations were conducted with member states of regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs), technical experts, and other stakeholders to establish a Common African Position (CAP) on this nexus.

In March 2023, the AU Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (PAPS) Department organized a workshop to outline the methodology for developing the African Climate Security Risk Assessment (ACRA). This workshop delineated methodologies for evaluating climate security risks and vulnerabilities. Subsequently, consultations were carried out across the continent in the five regions, utilizing Adelphi’s Weathering Risk Methodology for climate security risk assessment.

On 27 October 2023, the ACRA and the Report of the Chairperson on the Climate, Peace, and Security Nexus were presented to AU member states for further consideration and review during a virtual consultative and validation meeting. Subsequently,
following the member states’ validation, the ACRA and the Report of the Chairperson on the nexus were presented to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in November 2023. This comprehensive assessment identifies critical climate security risks in Africa, offering valuable insights for well-informed decision-making.

In response to the findings of the African Climate Risk Assessment (ACRA), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) endorsed the ACRA and the African Union Chairperson’s Report on the Study on the Nexus between Climate Change, Peace, and Security during its 1184th meeting held on 7 November 2023. The PSC requested that these reports be presented at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) 28 in Dubai.

Building on the momentum from the Africa Climate Summit in Kenya, held from 4 – 6 September 2023, the AU hosted a high-level presentation of the ACRA report at COP28. This presentation marked a significant step towards developing a Common African Position (CAP) on the climate change, peace, and security nexus. It also contributed to the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace. Notably, for the first time, the PSC representatives from all five African regions attended COP28, with to raise awareness on UNFCCC processes.

With the endorsement of the ACRA study and the Chairperson’s Report on the climate change, peace, and security nexus, the AU member states are expected to adopt a CAP on climate, peace, and security in 2024. This process has been informed by the PSC Communique of the 1051st meeting held in 2021. The CAP will demonstrate a unified African position in international climate negotiations, advocating for the integrating climate, peace, and security concerns into global discussions on common pathways to promote climate action, peace, security, and development.

**KEY MESSAGES ON THE CLIMATE CHANGE, PEACE AND SECURITY NEXUS**

Following an inclusive consultative process in Africa, 15 key messages on the climate change, peace, and security were presented at the COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt - November 2022.

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<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>A peaceful and stable continent can be an enabler for climate ambition and action, while instability, including conflict, terrorism and violent extremism can be a barrier to same;</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>Climate Change has indirect negative impacts on Peace and Security, while instability also has direct impacts on climate change and the environment;</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td>A good knowledge of the complex linkages between the Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus and Development can facilitate effective preventive, adaptation and mitigation efforts in all of Africa;</td>
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<td>Responses to climate change security-related risks and threats require a Common African Position, national ownership, and coordinated and context-specific African approaches;</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Climate financing remains the fulcrum in promoting the green transformative agenda in Africa towards peace, security, stability, humanitarian support and relief, socio economic growth and sustainable development and, thus, requires partner support;</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Strengthened continental early warning systems are essential in preventing disasters and supporting disaster risk reduction and adaptation, which is a major priority in Africa towards building resilience and promoting sustainable livelihoods;</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Water, food and energy are essential components of human security that are consistently threatened by climate change impacts, including conflicts, and as a result require urgent attention;</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Climate Induced Displacement, mobility or migration are both adaptation strategies and peace and security stressors that require appropriate responses or strategies;</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Just transition pathways, reflected in equitable and contextual approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, are essential in providing equal opportunities for growth and development as part of conflict prevention and stabilization efforts in Africa;</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Failure to properly address Climate Change Loss &amp; Damages in Africa serves as a threat multiplier and exacerbate vulnerabilities;</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Women, children, youth, people living with disabilities, the elderly, internally displaced persons and refugees are the most-affected by climate change security-related risks and threats; they are vulnerable and have special needs that must be addressed; and have major roles to play in conflict prevention and silencing the guns in Africa;</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development programmes and projects are essential in climate security and environmental protection, in order to prevent a relapse into violence or conflicts, and for promoting climate action and peace-building initiatives in the post-conflict and stabilization phases;</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Economic shocks and trade disruptions, caused mainly by conflicts, wars and health pandemics, worsen climate change responses, and require climate change and environmental diplomacy for containment;</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Responses to environmental and climate change security impacts must not be identified, designed, and implemented in silos, but must adopt a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, based on capacity-building, and technology transfer and development;</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Climate Change fragility and vulnerability assessments, as well as security profiles, are required within the various Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms in order to aid effective, holistic and coordinated responses within the Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus and its interlinkages with Humanitarian, and Development issues.</td>
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Since its inception on 25 May 1963, the African Union (AU) has continuously adapted to the evolving nature of armed conflicts in Africa. Initially focused on demonstrating solidarity during the liberation and independence wars, the organisation has since transitioned to addressing interstate conflicts, intrastate conflicts with regional implications, and combating violent extremism and terrorism. In addressing these challenges, securing financing has been paramount, with substantial contributions from both the AU’s multilateral and bilateral partners in peace and development, as well as its member states.

The Africa Peace Facility (APF), established by the European Union (EU), serves three critical peace and security components: the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), Peace Support Operations (PSOs), and the Early Response Mechanism (ERM). The ERM facilitates swift interventions by the AU, regional economic communities, and mechanisms (RECs/RMs) in crisis situations across Africa. Over the past 13 years, the ERM has backed approximately 50 African-led peace initiatives with a total of EUR 55 million. In 2023, the ERM allocated EUR 1 million for AU mediation efforts in Sudan and EUR 500,000 for political transitions in Mali and Burkina Faso.

The APF has transitioned into the European Peace Facility (EPF), with a focus on military interventions in peace support operations (PSOs), committing EUR 85 million to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The remaining funds from the existing APF programme continue to bolster the APSA 2020-2024 with EUR 40.5 million and other initiatives. Additionally, the United Kingdom has contributed GBP 23.5 million to ATMIS in Somalia.

Amid escalating security concerns in Africa and global crises like economic downturns, climate change, health emergencies, and inter-state tensions, the African Union (AU) has prioritized internal solutions. It has instituted mechanisms to secure sustainable and adaptable financing for AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and initiatives. The AU Peace Fund, founded in 1993, gained impetus with the appointment of H.E. Dr. Donald Kaberuka as the AU High Representative for the Peace Fund in January 2016. His role involves mobilizing extra resources for AU-led peace and security endeavors.


The PAPS Finance, in collaboration with other internal stakeholders, worked with member States to secure over nineteen million United States dollars ($19 million) to address the ATMIS budget shortfall for 2024. The team’s efforts also resulted in successful operationalising the African Union Revitalized Peace Fund by disbursing approved Crisis Reserve Facility (CRF) funds to various beneficiaries for peace interventions across the continent.

The team also facilitated the inventory and verification of Chinese-donated equipment and materials worth seventy million USD ($70 million), located at the African Union Continental Logistics Base (AU-CLB) headquarters in Douala, Cameroon. Additionally, PAPS Finance provided technical support to the regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and member states in formulating budgets for peace support operations.
In 2023, the Gender Peace and Security Program (GPSP) continued its mission to enhance capacity building, advocacy, and strategic partnerships aimed at integrating gender perspectives into AU peace processes.

The program developed three training curricula focusing on bolstering stakeholders’ capacities in gender mainstreaming. These curricula address gender mainstreaming in security sector reform (SSR), women’s leadership, and gender-sensitive conflict analysis.

Furthermore, the GPSP offered specialized skill courses on conflict prevention, early warning, mediation, and gender-based violence to women’s networks and leaders from regions such as the Sahel, East Africa, Central Africa, and North Africa. The objective was to empower local women leaders, enabling them to make more impactful contributions to conflict prevention and mediation through gender-sensitive approaches in peace and security. These initiatives have equipped stakeholders with the necessary tools to foster a gender-inclusive peace and security environment and enhance women’s roles in peace and security settings.

The GPSP achieved significant milestones by advocating and collaborating with like-minded organizations and women’s civil society groups to promote research and dialogue on gender, Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), and related subjects. Accomplishments include signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the African Union and the African First Ladies Peace Mission to enhance high-level advocacy for women’s leadership in peace processes and peacebuilding. Additionally, the program operationalized the PAPS civil society working group on WPS, validated operational guidance notes on gender mainstreaming in early warning systems, conducted a gender expert review of the AU PCRD Policy Framework, and developed a step-by-step guide on gender mainstreaming to bridge the gap between political commitments and implementation. The development of gender-sensitive tools and capacity-building products aims to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction frameworks through a gender lens.

The GPSP actively engaged in high-level forums and consultative meetings, highlighting the importance of strategic collaborations. Key activities included participation in the 4th Africa Forum on WPS, a consultative meeting between the African Union, regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs), and member states to implement and report on the WPS agenda, and a High-Level Conference with Sudanese Women Leaders aimed at influencing the peace process and supporting coalition building. These initiatives underscore the GPSP’s pivotal role in shaping policy and operational frameworks, facilitating knowledge exchange, and fostering co-learning on best practices and evidence generation to advance gender mainstreaming efforts among member states, RECs/RMs, and the AU for gender-inclusive peace and security.

Launch of the first national chapter of the FemWise-African Network - Kampala, Uganda, September 2023
The FemWise-Africa Network continues to promote the significant role of women in preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue endeavors. This includes participation in AU-led election observation and preventive diplomacy missions throughout 2023, including those to Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Madagascar, Egypt, and the DRC. Notably, in Sierra Leone, the network dispatched women mediators to assist the Independent Commission on Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC) in both Track 1 and 2 mediation efforts.

The FemWise-Africa Network has also maintained its long-term deployments in the AU Liaison Offices in Sudan, South Sudan, and Chad, aiming to provide technical mediation support for ongoing peace processes. These deployments significantly contribute to AU-led peace processes, focusing on ensuring gender sensitivity and inclusivity.

In August 2023, the assignment of Justice Effie Owuor, FemWise-Africa Co-chair, to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security’s Peace Advocacy Mission underscored the AU’s dedication to integrating women into peacebuilding and dialogue efforts. This initiative included advocating for greater female participation in the Nairobi and Luanda processes aimed at fostering peace in the eastern DRC.

In August 2023, the Panel of the Wise officially adopted the Decentralisation Framework for the FemWise-Africa Network. This move enables the Commission to assist in establishing and operationalizing regional and national chapters of the network. The decentralization initiative seeks to foster the emergence of a substantial number of women involved in mediation, dialogue, and conflict prevention across all levels. It also emphasizes the role of women mediators in supporting regional and national peace efforts led by Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs), and member states.

At the regional level, the Commission continued its support for the establishment of FemWise-ECOWAS and FemWise-ECCAS. At the national level, it facilitated the launch of FemWise-Africa national chapters in Uganda, Malawi, and Ethiopia. These chapters are anchored and hosted within various national ministries tasked with advancing peacebuilding efforts in their respective countries. Specifically, in Uganda, the chapter operates under the Ministry of EAC Affairs (MEACA), in Malawi under the Ministry of Local Government, Unity, and Culture, and in Ethiopia under the Ministry of Peace. Collaborating closely with the host ministries, these chapters aim to facilitate the implementation of national and community-based initiatives that promote the meaningful involvement of women in conflict prevention and mediation processes.

At the international level, the FemWise-Africa Network continues its efforts to strengthen collaboration and advocate for the equal participation of women in peace processes. In this regard, it has since 2023 served as the Secretariat of the Global Alliance (GA) of Women Mediator Networks. In October 2023, FemWise-Africa also organized a High-Level Event on the Role of Women Mediators in Negotiating Ceasefires and Security Arrangements during the annual UN Open Debate on Women, Peace, and Security in New York. The event aimed to assess the achievements and challenges faced by women mediators in negotiating ceasefires and security arrangements, fostering reflection and identifying areas for improvement.

In December 2023, the Network hosted the Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance of Women Mediator Networks at the AU Commission. This gathering served as a global platform for sharing experiences and promoting the active participation of women in peace processes, while also enhancing advocacy efforts with policymakers.
In 2023, the Department reiterated the significance of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda, highlighting the AU’s Youth for Peace (Y4P) program and the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs) in advancing advocacy for National Action Plans (NAPs) on YPS continent-wide. Substantial headway was achieved in member states like The Gambia, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Seychelles, Kenya, Liberia, and Tunisia, aligning with the priorities of the Continental Framework on YPS.

At the regional level, the Y4P program collaborated closely with RECs/RMs to formulate regional action plans and policies, enhancing systematic YPS implementation. Progress was also made in integrating youth into AU-led mediation, preventive diplomacy, and peace endeavors. Operational details for the Network of African Youth in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (WiseYouth Africa) were finalized, slated to launch in 2024, aiming to bolster youth capacity in conflict prevention and mediation.

The Y4P program facilitated active African youth participation in pivotal peace, security, and governance forums, besides deploying AYAPs to AU election observation and preventive diplomacy missions in nations holding elections in 2023. This initiative aimed to elevate youth roles as peace advocates in electoral contexts.

Under the auspices of AU Champion on YPS, H.E. Evariste Ndayishimiye, the AU jointly convened the 2nd Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace, and Security, underscoring commitment to youth leadership and integration into peace and security dialogues.

The Department, alongside RECs/RMs, finalized the selection process for the 3rd cohort of AYAPs, set to commence their two-year tenure in 2024 following endorsement by the PSC and Heads of States and Government. The overwhelming response from nearly 3,000 African youth applicants reflected their keen interest in contributing to peace and security on the continent.

In November 2023, the AU Peace and Security Council held its annual meeting on the YPS Agenda, where the Y4P program provided updates on CFYPS implementation. The Council endorsed several recommendations to advance the YPS agenda, emphasizing continued AU-RECs/RMs collaboration, investment in youth research and mentorship, and youth engagement in mediation and reconciliation processes.
During the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2022, the Network of African Youth on Conflict Prevention and Mediation (WiseYouth) was established as a subsidiary mechanism under the Panel of the Wise to facilitate the active involvement of young people in preventive diplomacy, mediation, and dialogue initiatives across Africa. The WiseYouth Network was launched at the 13th High-Level Retreat of Special Envoys, High Representatives and Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the Commission in October 2022, in Windhoek, Namibia. Towards actualizing its operationalization, the AU Commission convened a consultative meeting with all RECs, RMIs, the LCBC and the G5-Sahel, from 31 August to 01 September 2023 in Bujumbura, Burundi, where the operational modalities and terms of reference for members of the network were finalized and validated. The Department will launch an open call for applications for the 1st cohort of WiseYouth and finalize the selection process in 2024.
In 2023, the AU continued to prioritise the promotion of children’s rights and protection in conflict situations. The PSC initiated “the Banjul Process,” while the AU and regional economic communities and mechanisms (RECs/RMs) intensified their efforts to integrate child protection into their programmes. Additionally, the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC) conducted a knowledge-sharing field mission in Sierra Leone.

**The Banjul Process**

From 4 to 5 December 2023, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) convened a Ministerial and High-Level Open Session on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children in Situations of Conflict in Africa, in Banjul, Republic of The Gambia, to raise awareness and exchange ideas on practical ways of preventing grave violations of the rights of children in situations of conflict in Africa.

The meeting brought together the PSC members, the representatives of the AU member states, the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC), AU organs/institutions and the regional economic communities and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (RECs/RMs), as well as partners, including the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace), African civil society organizations (CSOs) and representatives of the children affected by armed conflicts.

The PSC decided to institutionalize this platform, also known as the “Banjul Process,” to be held, on a rotational basis, at a venue to be agreed upon. The Banjul Process will serve as a continental community of practice on children in conflict situations to facilitate consistent lessons-learning and experience sharing with the AP-CAAC, member states, RECs/RMs and CSOs. The Banjul Process amplifies a fundamental pillar of the programme on protecting children in conflict situations to promote the voices of children in conflict situations in Africa.

**Engagement with RECs/RMs**

Under the auspices of the Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange (I-RECKE) on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, the AUC and RECs/RMs convened at a technical level in Lusaka, Zambia, from 15 to 17 August 2023, on the protection of children in conflict settings.

In line with AU decisions for member states and RECs/RMs to redouble efforts in mainstreaming child protection in their programmes, the session provided an opportunity for stocktaking on developing and implementing an action plan towards scaling up joint efforts and information sharing in preventing and responding to violations of the rights of children in situations of conflict in Africa. I-RECKE is a co-creation of the AU Commission and the eight AU-recognized RECs and two RMs to promote an institutional community of practice for intra-continental and cross-regional learning to build peace.

**Lessons from Sierra Leone on Rehabilitation and Reintegration**

The AP-CAAC undertook a lessons-learning mission to the Republic of Sierra Leone on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflicts, from 4 to 8 September 2023, as part of
efforts to advocate for the rights and welfare of children in conflict settings. The mission engaged with critical stakeholders in Sierra Leone, including representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Gender, Children’s Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Support Unit, the National Human Rights Commission, UNICEF and CSOs including Save the Children, Fumbal Tok and Centre for Memory and Reparations.

Best practices and key lessons learnt from Sierra Leone include the establishment of relevant normative and institutional frameworks, mainstreaming child protection in peacemaking and peacebuilding, using a child rights-based approach in rehabilitation and reintegration, interventions in education and skills training and how to mainstream child protection in DDR. Fostering interagency coordination, collaboration and multisectoral approach, resource mobilisation and partnership, the need for sustained psychosocial support and the use of traditional methods to foster reconciliation were highlighted. In 2024, the AP-CAAC in collaboration with other key stakeholders, will build on these lessons when engaging AU Member States.

Through the AU Border Programme (AUBP), the Commission sustained its assistance to member states in delineating, demarcating, and reaffirming inter-state boundaries, promoting cross-border cooperation, and enhancing the capacities of border stakeholders. From 19 to 20 July 2023, the AUBP, in partnership with Malawi and Zambia, commemorated the 13th African Border Day (ABD) in Chipata, Zambia, under the AU’s theme of the year, “Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)”. Representatives from the AU, Zambia, Malawi, and affiliated organizations attended this event, traditionally observed on June 7. The 13th ABD celebration underscored the pivotal role of cross-border cooperation in effectively implementing the AfCFTA.
A notable highlight of the celebration was the visit to the Mwami One Stop Border Post (OSBP), where participants received insights into the challenges and advantages of such a facility. The establishment of OSBPs exemplifies the principles of cross-border cooperation, promoting a coordinated and integrated approach across borders to facilitate swift movement of people, trade, and bolster security. In collaboration with the East African Community (EAC), the AUBP facilitated a confidence-building peace caravan from 28 June to 7 July 2023. The caravan aimed to foster peaceful coexistence, strengthen neighborly relations, and promote amicable resolution of disputes among communities in Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda.

These efforts align with African normative frameworks such as the AU Strategy on Better Integrated Border Governance, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the Protocol Establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of Establishment. Participants emphasized the need for inclusive strategies to enhance public awareness of the benefits of cross-border cooperation through workshops, media campaigns, and educational programs.

Furthermore, the AUBP concluded its second and third regional studies, namely the Inter-state Boundary and Territorial Disputes in Southern Africa and the Border and Territorial Disputes in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Region. These studies aimed to assess the current status of border and territorial disputes in each region and propose actions for the Commission and relevant AU organs to prevent, manage, and resolve disputes.

In collaboration with the Life and Peace Institute, the AUBP convened the 2nd Meeting of the Borderlands Civil Society Platform from June 27 to 28, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. This platform aimed to strengthen local cross-border cooperation initiatives and enhance coordination and collaboration among cross-border actors in the Horn of Africa. The meeting adopted the platform’s statutes, elected its steering committee members, and developed a work plan for its inaugural year.

Moreover, the Commission organized a Strategic Review Workshop on the AUBP in October 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to provide a platform for experts to evaluate the program’s impact and re-conceptualize it regarding structure, strategic orientation, practices, and representation. The workshop reaffirmed the AUBP as a tool for conflict management, regional cooperation, and integration to strengthen border governance.

The reconfiguration of the AU Border Programme will be guided by the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention), the AU Border Governance Strategy, and Agenda 2063. As of 25 March 2024, ten (10) member states have ratified the Convention, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo, and Sierra Leone.

The AUBP will persist in supporting AU decisions, member states’ and border communities’ requests, and coordinating its activities with the initiatives of various stakeholders at continental, regional, and national levels.
ABOUT THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE

The key focus areas of the Conflict Management Directorate include providing early warning and generating response options for enhanced decision-making by the Peace and Security Council (PSC), other AU Organs, and Member States, supporting the AU-led and AU-supported conflict management interventions in the areas of mediation and dialogue, Peace Support Operations (PSO), and the work of the AU Liaison Offices (AULOs), building the capacities of national and regional actors, RECS/RMs, and Member States to manage conflicts with a particular focus on counterterrorism and preventing violent extremism and the provision of technical support to the Specialized Institutions of the AU working in peace and security including AFRIPOL, CAERT and CISSA.