“The security situation of the continent today is deeply marked by the metastasis of terrorism and the dangerous resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government. Furthermore, the two phenomena establish causal links known to all. One finds its pretexts in the significance and expansion of the former, and the necessary fight against the latter produces the illusion that the second is the answer to proven failures in the fight against the first.

The security situation on the continent calls for a real approach, which should scrutinise our peace and security architecture and its correlation with the new destabilising factors in Africa. Two major questions constrain the Commission to a rather modest role in the African decision-making process. The first is the narrow reading of the concept of subsidiarity. We certainly need to clarify better the relationship of subsidiarity and complementarity between the RECs and the continental organisation. The second problem to consider is the question of sovereignty of states. This is a protective shield against all sorts of abuses occurring in a member country.

A restrictive, even dogmatic reading of the intangible principle of the sovereignty of the MS raises an iron wall against any intervention by the continental organisation, either as a preventive measure through early warning, or as a remedy when the crisis breaks out. I am aware that sovereignty is not unique to our organisation. It impacts all international and regional organisations, but its force and the restrictive readings to which it is subjected at the AU remain excessive and are detrimental to the full capacity of the organisation for initiative and action. I call for more inventiveness and creative spirit to give back to the operational organ of our Union, greater possibility of action and influence on the political future of our states, in particular when these are in real need of attention.”

Extracted from the Speech of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, Addis Ababa, 5-6 February 2021.
Welcome to the second edition of Peace Dividends, the newsletter of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). This edition, which focuses on the highlights of the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, provides us with pointers on four critical issues to which the Department will dedicate considerable attention this year.

Notwithstanding the unprecedented lack of predictability of the last two years, we were able to make considerable progress in the areas of governance, peace and security. In Somalia, we are moving into the next phase of stabilisation with the transition from the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), which will commence on 1 April 2022. The new mission will consolidate the gains made by AMISOM and support the Government of Somalia in its state-building efforts through the implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan. In the Lake Chad Basin, the comprehensive efforts deployed by the Lake Chad Basin Commission through military and non-military interventions have yielded positive results against Boko Haram, and addressed some of the drivers of insecurity in the region.

Our efforts, however, have not been without challenges. The first is the existential threat of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation. Initially confined to a handful of countries on the continent, these threats have now engulfed all five sub-regions. The second is the rise in unconstitutional changes of government. The rising trend is particularly worrying, as one of the justifications appears to be a rise in insecurity related to the threat of terrorism sweeping through affected countries. The third threat is complex political transitions which are borne out of structural and systemic fragilities in governance. The democracy project on the continent cannot succeed without robust institutions that guarantee the rule of law and deliver governance dividends to our citizens. The fourth threat is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to limitations in mobility and interactions.

Even though considerable gains were made in adapting and identifying safe ways to work within the constraints imposed, we are certainly confronted with a new normal. We must address the challenges mentioned even as we search for enduring solutions to the health pandemic. To do so effectively, we will bolster our efforts to enhance synergy between the AU’s two main frameworks for governance, peace and security, namely the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). We will continue to implement the Priority Action Plan of the Department with a particular focus on early warning and conflict prevention; the operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF); post conflict reconstruction and development; mediation, dialogue and smarter utilisation of partnerships.

Conflict prevention through early warning and timely response remains the most efficient and cost-effective approach to sustainable peace, security and stability on the continent. The recently established Inter-Regional Knowledge Platform is designed to facilitate experience sharing and lessons learned, and will enhance our coordination efforts with Member States (MS) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on conflict prevention and early response. Our mediation and dialogue efforts in Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan support the de-escalation of conflicts to enable sustainable solutions. The review of the 2006 AU Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy Framework will provide us with the right tools to better support MS emerging from conflicts and complex transitions.

To Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030, we must address the structural causes of conflict by strengthening good governance, leveraging the legitimacy of our institutions to promote the notion of sovereignty as responsibility in our MS, and building robust partnerships.
The resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in Africa, including a return to military intervention in civilian politics, was a major theme at the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Recent developments in Chad, Mali, Guinea, Tunisia, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) highlight the persistent challenge of entrenching a culture of constitutionalism and democratic governance on the continent. For the first time in the 20-year history of the AU, four MS (Mali, Guinea, Sudan and Burkina Faso) were suspended from participating in the activities of the Union in one year. This occurred in accordance with AU legal and normative frameworks on UCG.

The AU Constitutive Act is rooted in a vision for the African continent that is anchored in democracy, good governance, the rule of law, constitutionalism and respect for human rights. In particular, the upholding of constitutional order and rule of law is viewed not only as a critical precondition for the consolidation of democratic governance, but as an integral component for continental peace, stability and development. The Constitutive Act can be regarded as the most important instrument in terms of scope and reach in promoting constitutional order and rule of law, and is legally binding on all 55 AU MS. In addition to the act, the AU’s normative framework includes the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

The Lomé Declaration (2000) defines the following four scenarios as UCG: a) military coup d’état against a democratically elected government; b) intervention by mercenaries to replace a democratically elected government; c) replacement of democratically elected governments by armed dissident groups and rebel movements; and d) refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party after free and fair elections. The ACDEG expanded this four-pronged definition of UCG to include a fifth element, which is any amendment or revision of constitutions or legal instruments that undermine the principles of democratic change of government.
A key challenge confronting the AU is a lack of enforcement and compliance with these continental commitments at the national level. There is broad consensus that the AU needs to boost efforts in addressing governance deficits and threats to constitutional order by strengthening, among others, national, regional and continental early warning and response mechanisms. African leaders reaffirmed the AU’s zero tolerance for UCG and endorsed the Peace and Security Council’s call for a comprehensive study of the structural root causes and impact of UCG on the continent. The study will review a number of instruments, including AGA and the Lomé Declaration.

The study will also be an opportunity to consider the efficacy of existing AU legal instruments and normative frameworks in preventing or appropriately responding to phenomena such as popular uprisings. Such uprisings swept through the northern part of the continent in 2010 and have since spread to other regions.

In January 2022, the PSC held a dedicated session on UCG and underscored the importance of addressing the underlying causes of UCG, “…including governance deficits, mismanagement of diversity, marginalisation, violation of human and peoples’ rights, refusal to accept electoral defeats, manipulation of constitutions [and the] illegal review of constitutions”, among other factors.

In an effort to strengthen democracy, good governance and constitutionalism on the continent, the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security organized, with the support of Partners, a three-day Reflection Forum in March 2022 to deliberate on the growing trend of UCG and identify durable responses. The Reflection Forum is a platform for brainstorming on critical issues related to the phenomenon of UCG. It is part of an extensive process to provide robust responses to governance, security, and socio-economic challenges, particularly resilience building in an increasingly complex global environment.

The Forum made three crucial observations. First, Africa’s leaders need to adhere to the values of democracy and good governance to address the legitimate concerns of citizens as a preventive measure. Second, the exploitation of sovereignty as a shield against implementing the AU’s instruments undermines preventive action. Third, applying sanctions against military coup leaders and failure to take principled and decisive action against leaders who manipulate constitutions reveal inconsistencies in the application of continental and regional frameworks on democracy, good governance and constitutionalism.

The Reflection Forum identified gaps in the existing legal, policy and normative frameworks and offered recommendations to make them more adaptable and responsive to the continent’s contemporary governance, peace, and security challenges. These recommendations will guide the extraordinary summit of the Assembly on unconstitutional changes of government in May 2022.

“While we are quick to sanction military coup leaders, civilians, who achieve similar ends via the manipulation of constitutions to remain in power, for example, go without sanctions, although their actions are clearly prohibited in our legal instruments. This means that the existing frameworks need to be strengthened to capture such infractions.”

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa
15-17 March, 2022
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AU SUMMIT

The 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union was held from 5–6 February 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Summit considered various conflict and crisis situations as well as thematic issues related to governance, peace, security and stability in Africa. These include the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation; the rise of unconstitutional change (UCG) and the need to engage and accompany MS to restore normal constitutional order; the critical importance of concerted and coordinated support to complex political transitions; and the impact of COVID-19 on efforts to address peace and security challenges in Africa.

African leaders condemned the surge in UCG and stressed the need to continue strengthening democratic and electoral processes and institutions. They acknowledged that building, nurturing and consolidating democracy is a long term endeavour, and only effective/good governance can deliver enduring peace and stability. The deliberations focused, among others, on the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Libya, Mozambique, the Central African Republic (CAR), as well as foreign interference, foreign fighters and mercenaries. The Summit also considered maritime security, the role of women and youth in the AU peace and security agenda, and the negative impact of climate change.

Further, the Assembly discussed the status of the implementation of the roadmap on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030, and endorsed its monitoring and evaluation framework. The session also reviewed existing partnerships on governance, peace and security to enhance complementarity and coherence. African leaders decided to convene an extraordinary summit in Equatorial Guinea in May 2022 to tackle the growing challenges of terrorism and UCG on the continent.

The Assembly endorsed the new members of the Peace and Security Council elected by the Executive Council. Cameroon, Djibouti, Morocco, Namibia and Nigeria will serve a three year term, while Burundi, Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Tunisia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal and The Gambia will serve a two-year term – commencing on 1 April 2022.
Operationalising the AU Peace Fund

The AU Peace Fund, one of the five pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), was established in June 1993 as the principal financing instrument for peace and security activities. In 2016, the AU High Representative on the financing of the Union and the AU Peace Fund, Donald Kaberuka, presented a report titled “Securing Predictable and Sustainable Financing for the African Union” to the AU Assembly in Kigali. The report highlighted that “high levels of donor dependency have weakened ownership of the AU’s mandate”.

The report underlined the necessity of a revitalised Peace Fund, which would be endowed with $400m in MS contributions to deliver on the Assembly’s decision to finance 25% of the AU’s peace and security activities. The revitalisation of the AU Peace Fund is part of a series of broader financial reforms at the AU, which include enhancing African agency by attaining financial autonomy and accountability.

Since the July 2016 Kigali decision, MS contributed over 50% of the targeted endowment of the $400 million needed to operationalise the Peace Fund. While the targeted sum is yet to be reached, the pressing need to respond to prevailing crisis situations has necessitated the full operationalisation of the Peace Fund.

In May 2021, the AU Commission (AUC) through the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, developed pilot projects in accordance with the approved three funding windows. Window 1 is dedicated to ‘preventive diplomacy and mediation’, with a focus on regional responses to the crises in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. Window 2 covers ‘institutional capacity building’, with emphasis on capacitating the AUC, specialised agencies as well as the Regional Economic Communities and the Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs). Window 3 focuses on ‘peace support operations’, with priority given to pre-deployment capabilities of the AU and full operationalisation of the African Standby Force (ASF). These projects have been approved for implementation in 2022.

EU–AU Summit: Strengthening partnerships for Africa’s peace and security

The AU and the European Union (EU) share long-standing cooperation in the area of governance, peace, and security dating from the first Africa–EU Summit held in Cairo in 2000. In 2018, the EU and the AU signed a memorandum of understanding to revitalise the existing cooperation. In 2020, several framework agreements that govern the partnership came to an end, paving the way for renewed and enhanced cooperation. In October 2021, the AU and EU held a ministerial meeting in Kigali ahead of the AU-EU Summit that took place in Brussels from 17–18 February 2022.

The Summit addressed four priority areas, namely the COVID-19 response; green and digital transformation; peace, security and governance; and migration and mobility. In the peace, security and governance pillar, among others, the Summit recommitted efforts to preventing, combatting and responding to the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

The African Peace Facility, which was established in 2003 as the EU support mechanism to AU peace and security efforts,
is expected to be dissolved. In this context, the Summit discussed the new global fund, namely the European Peace Facility (EPF), and its implications for continued support to African peace and security initiatives, including AU peace support operations. The AU-EU Summit is a statutory meeting that is convened every three years to reinforce the partnership between Africa and Europe.

**Maritime Security**

Promoting peace and security in Africa’s maritime domain is a fundamental component of the aspirations enshrined in AU Agenda 2063, the continent’s blueprint for socioeconomic advancement and regional integration. Africa’s blue economy potential faces many pressures. Together with related maritime security threats, these factors undermine the continent’s growth and the general wellbeing of its citizens. Threats in this domain include climate change, piracy, the dumping of toxic waste, smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, illegal unregulated and unreported fishing, as well as smuggling of illicit drugs, goods and weapons.

To combat these threats, the AU Assembly adopted two key instruments, namely, the 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050), and the Africa Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, in January 2014 and October 2016 respectively. These frameworks contain the prerequisites for enhanced collaboration between AU Member States, RECs/RMs and the wider global community in key areas. These include capacity building, maritime information and intelligence sharing, and joint military/naval exercises to fight insecurity and promote peace and security in the continent’s maritime ecosystem – which are integral to sustainable development in Africa.
Regional Developments

Central Africa

Countries in Central Africa are confronted with critical security challenges, which pose dire implications for the humanitarian situation across affected areas. The confluence of political contestation, communal conflict, cross-border security challenges and climate change present complex security challenges to the region.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the unilateral ceasefire by the government, the adoption and implementation of the security roadmap and the progress made with the republican dialogue have improved security. Despite these positive developments, the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons – particularly along the borders with Chad, Sudan, and South Sudan – and the reorganisation of the coalition of armed movements, continue to threaten the country’s security. Joint efforts by the AU, UN, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the EU provide coordinated responses to the challenges in the country. These are enhanced by frequent interactions between AUC leadership and the government. The deployment of AU military observers, human rights and political officers will further bolster efforts to identify a sustainable solution to the crisis in CAR.

In Chad, the political crisis that ensued after the death of President Idris Déby Itno laid bare the political fault lines in the country. In particular, it raised concerns over ongoing efforts to address security threats posed by jihadists in border areas with Cameroon, Niger...
and Nigeria. In recognition of the complexities underpinning the transition in Chad, the AU remains fully engaged in the search for a political solution to the crisis. In the Lake Chad Region, the MNJTF and its troop-contributing countries have progressively downgraded the operational capabilities of Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the region. With over 32,000 desertions and scores more returning to their ancestral homelands, there has been a renewed focus on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and the resettlement of displaced persons as part of broader stabilisation activities. Several efforts have been instrumental in this regard, particularly the construction of houses; improvement in law and order; and the implementation of livelihood models through the Regional Stabilisation Facility, which is inspired by the AU supported Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS).

In December 2021, the AU-RSS team, with support from the Training for Peace Programme (TfP) through the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), commissioned a mapping of governance actors and institutions in the Lake Chad Basin region with the aim of promoting Pillar 5 (Governance and the Social Contract) of the RSS, and enhancing civic participation in governance processes.

East Africa

The East Africa region continues to face challenges related to complex political transitions, border disputes, and terrorism and violent extremism. The AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is phasing out and giving way to the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), after significant contributions to the stability of the country over the past 15 years. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has given ATMIS a three-year mandate to support the Somalia Government in assuming full responsibility for security in line with the Somalia Transition Plan.

In Sudan, there are ongoing efforts to facilitate an inclusive political process and a return to a civilian-led transition. The AU has expressed concern over the excessive use of force, and has underscored the primacy of dialogue among all stakeholders in the
The AU High Representative on the Horn of Africa, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, continues to champion efforts aimed at the conciliatory settlement of the conflict in Ethiopia. This includes through shuttle diplomacy between the government and the Tigrayan People Liberation Front (TPLF). Notable confidence-building measures have been taken to help deescalate tensions and find a peaceful resolution to the crisis, including the decisions by the government to establish a National Dialogue Commission, release key political prisoners and lift the state of emergency. The AU has called on all parties to commit to an immediate cessation of hostilities and appealed for unhindered humanitarian access and the restoration of much-needed services and medical supplies to the Tigray region.

In South Sudan, the AU continues to support and advocate for the full and inclusive implementation of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The AUC remains concerned about the slow pace of implementation of the R-ARCSS, including key outstanding provisions related to unification of forces, lack of accountability and reconciliation. The implementation of the agreement is further hindered by the recent clashes between SPLM/A-IO factions, and a delay in the formation of parliamentary committees and the enactment of critical legislation. The AU PSC undertook a solidarity mission to South Sudan from 23–28 February 2022 to coincide with the second anniversary of the formation of the Transitional Government, with the aim of encouraging the leadership of South Sudan to fast-track the implementation of the R-ARCSS.

**North Africa**

In Libya, the security situation has improved following the signing of the UN-facilitated ceasefire agreement in October 2020. The AU closely follows political and security
developments in the country, but remains concerned about external interference and the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries. The continental body continues to call for the withdrawal of these forces in a gradual, balanced and sequenced manner, in accordance with the 5+5 Joint Military Commission’s withdrawal plan. Elections that were initially planned for December 2021 have been postponed indefinitely due to a lack of consensus on the legal framework and the list of candidates. The AU underscores the importance of the unification of national political, security and financial institutions to consolidate durable peace and stability in Libya. The AU also works closely with the UN and the EU to address the plight of migrants through the Migration Tripartite Task Force.

**West Africa**

The West Africa region faces multiple security challenges. These include terrorism and violent extremism, transnational organised crime, a resurgence of UCGs, communal-related conflict and maritime insecurity. The spread of terrorism from the Sahel to coastal states raises particular concerns, as it risks undermining socio-economic, democratic and political gains in the region. This is exacerbated by complex political transitions and the stalled implementation of peace agreements.

In Mali, successive coups in the last year have undermined efforts to restore constitutional order. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the AU and the UN continue to engage the transitional government in support of an inclusive dialogue among key Malian actors and the effective implementation of the 2015 Algiers agreement. Such dialogue would provide a viable framework for comprehensively addressing the governance, peace and security challenges facing the country.

Following the coups in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, ECOWAS and the AU suspended these countries’ membership to the regional and continental bodies. This is in accordance with their respective normative instruments. ECOWAS and the AU continue to engage these states constructively towards a return to a civilian-led and democratic dispensation.

**Southern Africa**

The AU continues to support regional efforts led by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) through the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) to boost Mozambique’s institutional capacity in combatting terrorism and violent extremism in the Cabo Delgado province. SAMIM was deployed within the framework of the ASF, and has received resources from the AU Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon. In line with the directive of the PSC, the AUC continues to engage the government of Mozambique and SADC, as well as relevant partners, including the EU, to provide the necessary financial, technical and logistics support to SAMIM.
“The security situation on the Continent now calls for a real new approach which should question our peace and security architecture and its correlation with the new destabilising factors in Africa. In the absence of this burst of intelligence and decision, I have serious questions about the future of our flagship project on Silencing the Guns within the fixed timeline. The dangerous expansion of evil demands stronger international mobilisation and more fruitful, more concrete, more active inter-African solidarity. It is particularly disconcerting to see, here and there, the vague desire of non-African commitments to support the African countries under attack, while the tenuous ray of African solidarity only allows us to see the immensity of the African paralysis in the face of the burning neighboring houses.”

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With the support of the Training for Peace Programme