

EU-African Union relations: joint communiqué of the AU Peace and Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee



On 26 October 2020, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the European Union (EU) Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) held their **12th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting**, virtually, as part of their regular dialogue within the framework of Article 17 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and the AU – EU partnership. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU and Chairperson of the AUPSC for October 2020 and H.E. Ambassador Sofie From- Emmesberger, Permanent Chair of the EU PSC.

The discussion during the 12th Joint Consultative Meeting focused on the situations in the Sahel region, Sudan and Somalia. The AU PSC and the EU PSC noted that October 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. While much progress has been made with regards to women's inclusion in peace processes, further efforts are required to advance implementation.

On the situation in the **Sahel**, the AU PSC and the EU PSC expressed deep concern over the growing deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, mainly caused by social and economic unbalances, terrorism and organized crime, which is further aggravating the security and humanitarian situation in the region. They strongly condemned attacks against civilian populations, against armed and security forces of the countries of the region, and all other regional and international forces. Both the AU PSC and the EU PSC reaffirmed their commitment to continue supporting the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). They underscored the need for additional resources to be availed to the Mission, with a view to further enhancing its capacity to more effectively and efficiently discharge its mandate. They also reaffirmed their support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. They called upon all stakeholders and international community to also support the Force by providing the necessary resources and building its capacity to enable it to effectively and efficiently discharge its mandate. The European Union Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions continue to assist national security forces, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and MINUSMA.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC reiterated the importance of enhanced coordination, as well as the importance of addressing the underlying root causes and drivers of the deteriorating situation in the Sahel region, through comprehensive approaches that include development of peacebuilding/post-conflict reconstruction, as well as a political and a development dimension.

They welcomed the creation of the Coalition for the Sahel, and in this regard reaffirmed the importance of respect for human rights and fight against impunity by all stakeholders and State authorities, including security and defense forces. They further noted the upcoming elections in Burkina Faso and Niger, and stressed the importance of ensuring their peaceful organization. They commended efforts being deployed by the G5 Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in combating the scourges of terrorism and organized crime, and noted the ongoing consultations between relevant stakeholders to deploy an additional 3000 troops pursuant to AU Assembly Decision 792. They noted the intention of the AU to re-energize the Nouakchott Process within the context of the review process of the AU Strategy for the Sahel region. They welcomed the important and continued EU commitment to the region with the mobilization of various resources in the security, development and humanitarian domain. The ongoing revision of the EU Strategy for the Sahel region will be an opportunity to achieve a more result-oriented approach, striving for strengthened accountability.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC welcomed the positive developments in the evolution of the situation in **Mali**, with the establishment of a civilian-led transition through the appointments of the President, the Deputy President and the Prime Minister, the formation of the Transitional Government and the release of all officials who had been detained on 18 August 2020, in line with the respective decisions of the AU PSC and the ECOWAS and the adoption of the Charter of the Transition. They encouraged the Malian Stakeholders to place national interests above all else and to exert their efforts towards the successful implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali, emanated from the Algiers process (2015), and the Transition Charter, including the organization of credible, transparent and democratic elections within the stipulated time frame and measures to improve governance. In the same context, the AU PSC and the EU PSC appealed to the international community to continue to support Mali, particularly during this transition phase, and to especially enhance its humanitarian assistance to Mali, given the gravity of the humanitarian situation, exacerbated by the outbreak of the global novel coronavirus pandemic.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC noted the EU's close coordination with ECOWAS and the AU and they welcomed the EU's commitment under its cooperation and CSDP activities.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC reiterated the importance of enhanced coordination towards more effective regional stability and security in the Horn of Africa; the importance of regional and cross-regional partnerships was highlighted. They recognized the two historic transitions in Sudan and Ethiopia in progress. The revision of the EU's 2011 Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa provides an opportunity to further enhance the EU's supportive role in the region.

On **Sudan**, the AU PSC and EU PSC reconfirmed their commitment to accompany Sudan on its political, economic and social reform path, with the view of making the country's transition to democracy a success. They commended the efforts of the civilian-led Transitional Government of Sudan in putting in place much needed political and economic reforms, including strengthening

human rights. In this context, they welcomed the criminalization of Female Genital Mutilation and the reforming of the criminal justice system. The AU PSC and EU PSC welcomed the announcement by the Transitional Government of Sudan to undertake effective transitional justice measures with a view to ensuring justice for the victims and accountability for the past atrocities in Darfur. In this regard, they also welcomed the recent visit of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to Sudan.

The AU PSC and EU PSC welcomed the recent announcement by the US President on the intention of the Government of the United States of America to remove Sudan from the U.S List of State Sponsors of Terrorism (SST). They looked forward to the implementation of this announcement, as soon as possible, in order to create conducive conditions for economic recovery and social development in the country. They also encouraged the Transitional Government of Sudan, to identify priority areas for interventions aimed at promoting post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development. They appealed to all international partners to honour their pledges made during the High-Level Sudan Partnership Conference in June 2020 and to demonstrate genuine and meaningful commitment towards supporting Sudan in addressing the current economic, financial and monetary challenges.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC welcomed the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on 3 October 2020 paving the way for the restoration of an inclusive and comprehensive peace in the country; and in this regard, they urged the signatory parties to implement the provisions of the peace agreement and work together in promoting durable peace in Sudan, including ensuring the participation of women and youth in this process.

The AU PSC and EU PSC also welcomed the earlier signing of a Joint Agreement on Principles, on 3 September 2020, by the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of Sudan, Abdalla Hamdok, and the Chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N-AH), Abdelaziz al-Hilu, as a positive step towards maintaining the cessation of hostilities and creating conducive conditions for all parties to find constructive political solutions.

The AU PSC and EU PSC stressed the need for the Sudanese authorities and all other relevant Sudanese stakeholders to continue pursuing their efforts through the ongoing dialogue, cooperation and commitment to collectively contribute to the implementation of the peace agreement and address the myriad of challenges facing the country. They underscored the need for sustained and meaningful participation of women and the youth in decision making and peace building at all levels.

The AU PSC and EU PSC urged all non-signatory parties to the Peace Agreement, particularly Mr. Abdul Wahid Mohammed al-Nur, to immediately and unconditionally embrace the peace process and commit to the cessation of hostilities with a view to building sustainable peace in the country.

The AU PSC and EU PSC encouraged Sudan's neighboring countries, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), AU and the wider international community to continue to provide the required political, technical, economic support to Sudan and its people, with a view to

maintaining the current momentum and consolidating the gains made thus far.

The AU PSC and EU PSC expressed deep concern over the humanitarian situation in Sudan, which has been exacerbated by floods, desert locust infestation and the novel coronavirus pandemic and, in this regard, they appealed to the international community for continued and increased humanitarian support.

On **Somalia**, the AU PSC and the EU PSC welcomed the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), including the holding of the Dhusamareeb consultation process which resulted in the agreement on the electoral model for the 2020/21 national elections. They emphasized the need for the implementation of the agreed electoral model and to ensure a peaceful and transparent delivery of the election. The AU PSC and the EU PSC welcomed the resumption of constructive dialogue and collaboration between the FGS and the FMS aimed at degrading the Al Shabaab and other terrorist groups, as well as ensuring restoration of peace and security in Somalia.

The AU PSC and EU PSC emphasized that restoration of peace and security in Somalia should be the focus of all political actors in Somalia, based on FGS and FMS working together in a federal model with its declination in political, economic and security terms. The AU PSC and EU PSC took note of the current process of reviewing the Somali Transition Plan (STP) led by the FGS in collaboration with the AU and other international partners and urged all parties to the process to remain focused on its completion, as soon as possible. Furthermore, they called on all Somali stakeholders to actively pursue their engagement towards the conclusion of the constitutional review process.

The AU PSC and EU PSC expressed gratitude to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for its contribution to the creation of an enabling environment for the political process and paid tribute to the AMISOM Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and their nationals, especially those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the promotion of peace, security, stability and reconciliation in Somalia. They encouraged AMISOM to intensify its efforts in addressing peace and security challenges in Somalia, particularly eliminating the al Shabaab terrorist group. The AU PSC and the EU PSC agreed as well to further support the role of the AU and the IGAD as an agent of stabilization in the region.

The AU PSC and EU PSC, noting that more progress was needed, encouraged the FGS and FMS to expedite the force generation processes to occupy and secure all areas liberated from al Shabaab by AMISOM and stressed the need to ensure that the Somali National Army (SNA) forces are well equipped to take over security responsibilities, while noting the need for support for the Somali Security Sector Reform after 2021. In this regard, they emphasized the need for the FGS, with the support from AMISOM and UN, to identify appropriate approaches and strategies to effectively address the challenges facing the process of force generation by the SNA.

The AU PSC and EU PSC underscored the importance of respecting Somalia's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and, in this

regard, they urged all partners supporting the peace process in Somalia to coordinate and harmonize their support and to direct all their efforts towards supporting Somalia in its endeavours to restore peace, security and economic recovery.

The AU PSC and EU PSC took note of the ongoing consultations on convening a security conference on 30 November 2020, co-hosted by the Federal Government of Somalia, the AU and the EU, aimed at galvanising support for the implementation of the updated Transition Plan and seeking alignment of an appropriate security and broader stabilization framework for Somalia post-2021.

In the same context, they commended the EU for its major financial support to AMISOM to date and its complementary provision of non-lethal equipment to SNA battalions engaged in transition operations alongside AMISOM. The AU PSC and EU PSC recalled the UN Security Council Resolution 1863(2009) establishing a Trust Fund for AMISOM aimed at stepping up the predictable financial resource mobilization.

Further, the AU PSC and the EU PSC welcomed the conclusion of the EU's Strategic Review of its CSDP missions in the Horn of Africa and welcomed the assistance to the Somali security institutions and security forces in strengthening their capacities in the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC expressed deep concern over the prevailing humanitarian crisis in many parts of Somalia, which has been accentuated by floods, the resurgence of the desert locust infestation, and the novel coronavirus pandemic and, in this respect, they appealed to the international community to step up humanitarian support to Somalia and for the concerned international partners to contribute to the required \$1 billion Humanitarian Appeal for addressing the dire humanitarian challenges facing Somalia.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC recalled that peace and security are priorities for the overall EU- AU partnership. In view of the upcoming EU-AU Summit to be hosted in Brussels in 2021, both sides pledged to continue working towards ambitious joint deliverables.

The AU PSC and the EU PSC agreed to convene their next annual joint consultative meeting in 2021, on a date to be mutually agreed by the two sides.