

Peace and Security Council Report

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Current members of the Peace and Security Council: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda

Peace and Security Council Protocol

'The PSC shall encourage non-governmental organizations to participate actively in the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. When required such organizations may be invited to address the Peace and Security Council' – Article 20 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC of the African Union

Early warning issues for February 2014

During February, a number of potential peace and human security threats may require increased vigilance by the Peace and Security Council. These include threats of continuing instability and insecurity in Libya and Egypt, as well as inter-religious and factional conflict in the Central African Republic, the ongoing rebellion in northern Mali and violence in South Sudan amid a shaky ceasefire.

Recent attacks and bombings in Somalia by al-Shabaab are further reminders of the ever-present terrorist threat in the Horn of Africa; a threat that also extends into North, West and Central Africa through the terrorist acts of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar

Dine, Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army and their emulators.

In the meantime, developments in the still volatile eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and the situation in Madagascar in the wake of recent elections need to be monitored closely. It is also important to note that, despite the declining number of attacks on maritime trade, particularly off the East African coast, the potential threat of acts of piracy and robbery at sea is ever-present.

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► Current PSC Chair

Bio data: H.E. Nyolosi Mphale

Current posts: Lesotho's Ambassador to Ethiopia Permanent Representative to the AU and UNECA and Chair of the PSC

Livingstone formula

'Civil Society Organizations may provide technical support to the African Union by undertaking early warning reporting, and situation analysis which feeds information into the decision-making process of the PSC' – PSC/PR/(CLX), 5 December 2008, Conclusions of a Retreat of the PSC on a mechanism of interaction between the Council and CSOs.

Country analysis

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Introduction

The previous analysis on the Central African Republic (CAR) was published in the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Report in December 2013. This analysis covers the events that have occurred since that date. Readers who are interested in the earlier developments are encouraged to consult the December 2013 issue.

Previous AU/PSC communiqués

In the communiqué of 20 January 2014, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr Nkozasana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomed 'the election by the National Transitional Council (NTC) of Madame Catherine Samba-Panza as the new Head of State of the Transition in CAR'. She also commended 'the sense of responsibility, maturity and commitment' shown by all the CAR stakeholders. On 16 January 2014, at its 413th meeting on the situation in the CAR, the PSC welcomed the 'convening, in N'Djamena, on 9 and 10 January 2014, of an Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)' and took note of the resignation of Michel Djotodia and Nicolas Tiangaye. After welcoming the significant 'results already achieved in ensuring security in Bangui and the stabilisation of the country' by the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the deployment of the Rwandese contingent, the Council stressed the 'need for a coordination and collaboration mechanism' to ensure the success of MISCA's operations. The PSC also reiterated 'the need for the AU member states to fully support MISCA', particularly by providing financial resources, and to 'ensure that all international efforts are directed towards [the] strengthening of MISCA ... to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate and pave the way for [the] possible deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation'.

On 30 December 2013, the PSC held its 411th meeting and welcomed the transfer of authority from the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace of the Economic Community of Central African States (MICOPAX) to MISCA, which took place on 19 December 2013. The PSC also noted the efforts of the AUC to have additional military and police units deployed, and welcomed the visit to Bangui on 28 December 2013 by a joint AU-ECCAS delegation. The Council also reminded the CAR authorities of their responsibilities, particularly with regard to the protection of the civilian population and the promotion of peaceful coexistence, and asked the AUC to 'submit concrete proposals on ways and means of mobilizing additional resources' for MISCA prior to the AU Summit in late January 2014. Following the adoption by the United Nations (UN) of Resolution 2127 (2013), authorising the deployment of MISCA, the AUC Chairperson noted on 5 December 2013 that 'the spirit of consultation and cooperation ... has prevailed throughout the process leading to the adoption of this resolution'. In a communiqué of 22 November 2013, the AUC Chairperson announced some key new appointments to the MISCA management team, in consultation with ECCAS. Congolese Major General Jean Marie Michel Mokoko was appointed chief of mission, Brigadier General Martin Tumenta Chomu of Cameroon was appointed chief of the military component and Gabonese Gendarmerie Colonel Patrice Ostangue Bengone was appointed chief of the police component.

Crisis escalation potential

The resignation of Djotodia and Tiangaye helped end the mandate of a political elite unable to manage the deteriorating politico-security situation. The subsequent swift and smooth election of Samba-Panza marks the determination of the international community and the CAR authorities to establish a credible political power that can successfully lead the country toward the elections in February 2015. If the new leader of the transition and her government fail to create political consensus within the country, the peace process and national reconciliation will cease to make further progress. The ability of the transitional government to mobilise the necessary resources, including financial ones, for resuscitating the

administration of the country is also a factor that will determine future peace within the CAR.

A great deal of insecurity persists nationwide, and appeals to the old Central African Armed Forces (FACA) to return to their barracks will not be enough to restore public confidence. Scattered across the country since the overthrow of President François Bozizé, ex-FACA officers are currently leading the anti-Balaka forces and constitute one of the many causes of insecurity in the CAR. The payment of three months' salary arrears will be necessary to persuade them to help the country in its return to normalisation. More localised violence is also being fuelled by a desire for revenge and retaliation among anti-Balaka Seleka fighters. The disarmament of armed groups would be a crucial step toward restoring security and public order, but such an undertaking could be hampered by the ongoing proliferation of weapons in communities that feel compelled to protect themselves.

The intervention of the French army alongside MISCA on 5 December 2013 in Operation Sangaris (a reference to a species of African butterfly) has helped to establish an uneasy calm, compensating to some extent for the absence of security forces and an impartial army that can protect people from abuse. Operation Sangaris and MISCA seek in particular to 'contribute to protecting civilians and restoring security and public order, to stabilize the country and to create conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations who need it'. Bangui faces daily violence, and the situation is complicated by the militias' refusal to be disarmed for fear of attacks by the other side. In addition, the French troops have been accused of supporting the Christian militias and do not benefit from the same level of popular support as they received during Operation Serval in Mali. In addition, the Chadian soldiers in MISCA have been accused of supporting the Seleka rebels militarily. However, the resultant withdrawal of the Chadian armed forces has further complicated the challenge of achieving the envisioned MISCA troop strength of 6 000 uniformed personnel.

From a humanitarian perspective, it seems unlikely that people will be able to return to their homes in the

immediate future given that no warranty is being provided for their protection, in view of the region's continuing volatility. In the event that the delivery of humanitarian aid cannot be made secure, the living conditions of refugees and displaced persons are likely to deteriorate further.

Key issues and internal dynamics

The strong commitment of the international community, the AU and ECCAS member states has allowed the CAR to pass from one state of transition to another with the election of Samba-Panza and the nomination of her Prime Minister, André Nzapayeké. The new authorities now have to address the three key challenges of the crisis: forming a government, mobilising resources and securing the country.

It is essential that the transitional government takes into account the different demands of the various stakeholders involved in the conflict. However, the formation of an inclusive government with anti-Balaka and former Seleka representatives among its members does not exclude the risk of political clashes to determine who will ultimately control the army.

The government will have to mobilise more resources, mainly financial ones, to restart the state. Beyond the promises already made by its main partners, the donor conference on 1 February 2014 in Addis Ababa will be a further opportunity to raise funds. However, the collapse of policing, judicial and correctional institutions in the CAR raises the broader question of what means are available to the CAR authorities to ensure sustainable respect for human rights and justice.

Attempts by the previous interim president, Djotodia, to disarm armed groups have not only failed but have also polarised religious conflict, thereby fuelling tensions between Christian and Muslim communities. The proliferation of weapons and continuing clashes are undermining the implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process currently underway. The identification of FACA troublemakers and the disarmament of armed groups is therefore not the only issue. Samba-Panza should also include a security sector reform (SSR) process on the transition agenda to continue the peace, security and

stabilisation work started by MISCA and Operation Sangaris.

Besides the 220 000 refugees and 400 000 displaced people within and beyond the borders of the CAR, many other African nationals have already left the country due to the widespread disorder. As a sign of the pervasiveness of the insecurity, the government of Chad was the first to organise the repatriation of its citizens directly threatened by the crisis in the CAR. Thereafter, the governments of Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal, Mali and Nigeria also repatriated their citizens, totalling about 200 Ivoirians, 600 Nigerians, 700 Senegalese, 600 Malians and 1 200 Nigerians.

Geopolitical dynamics

Africa and RECs

In its final communiqué issued at the end of its sixth extraordinary session, held on 9 and 10 January 2014, the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS condemned the deadly violence that occurred in Bangui on 5 December 2013 and welcomed the decision of the AU PSC at its 408th meeting to authorise the temporary staffing of MISCA. On 19 December 2013, both organisations collaborated in transferring authority from MICOPAX to MISCA. In his speech on this occasion, the Secretary General of ECCAS, Ambassador Ahmad Allam-Mi, highlighted the efforts made by the ECCAS member states toward this goal.

During the 6th ECCAS Summit, the conference took note of the resignation of the then Head of State of the Transition and the Prime Minister of the CAR. Apart from the progress made at the end of the meeting, Chad, which occupied the ECCAS presidency, was presented as a key player in the stabilisation of the region. Through the leadership of President Idriss Déby, the countries of the sub-region are highly engaged in this issue. Although the stabilisation mission has now passed from MICOPAX to MISCA, ECCAS member states still remain at the heart of the implementation of MISCA.

The conference invited the National Transitional Council (NTC) and various components of the CAR's civil society organisations to continue the process of stabilising the country under the auspices of ECCAS as extended to the AU and international

partners. ECCAS heads of state appealed to the international community for financial and logistical support for MISCA to enable it to fulfil its mandate effectively, a prerequisite for the deployment and success of a possible UN mission in the CAR. However, even if ECCAS acts in consultation with the AU, the dynamics of the struggle for leadership in the management of conflicts between regional organisations and the continental body should always be kept in mind.

United Nations

Since the publication of his report on the CAR on 15 November 2013, in which UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed several options for the inclusion of the international community in supporting MISCA, he has repeatedly stated that 'sooner or later, there should be a UN Mission in the Central African Republic'. While the issue of funding remains a problem, the European Commission and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) organised a high-level meeting on the humanitarian crisis in the CAR on 20 January 2014 in Brussels, and has since received €200 million in development and stabilisation funds. The European Union (EU) on this occasion increased its aid to €45 million, but France appeared isolated within the UN Security Council in its efforts to mobilise widespread support for a robust intervention in the CAR. Other major Western countries have shown their unwillingness to engage in a new mission on the African continent and appear relatively reluctant to fund logistical and equipment needs.

International community

The EU is also involved in the joint efforts of the AU and ECCAS to stabilise the CAR. In order to help the French and African troops to secure Bangui and surrounding areas, European foreign affairs ministers decided on 20 January 2014 to authorise the deployment at the end of February 2014 of a European force comprising 400 to 600 soldiers. Estonia, Belgium and Poland are among the announced contributors. Until now, the EU has offered to provide financial assistance to MISCA through the Peace Facility for Africa to the amount of €50 million, plus €225 million paid by the EU to the CAR in development aid and €20 million in humanitarian aid.

Faced with the deteriorating situation in the CAR and following the adoption of Resolution 2127 by the UN Security Council, France's President François Hollande decided on 5 December 2013, on the eve of the Elysée summit for peace and security in Africa, to implement Operation Sangaris in order to strengthen the contingent of 600 soldiers already there. Resolution 2127 authorises French forces 'to temporarily take all necessary measures, within their capabilities and in the areas where they are deployed, to support the MISCA'. Some 1 600 soldiers are currently deployed in the country. In addition, the United States (US) has committed up to \$100 million in military assistance, including training, equipment and the airlifting of the African contingents.

Civil society

Apart from ethical and religious divisions, the CAR's civil society is also divided on major national political and social issues. This is particularly the case concerning the question of the organisation of an inclusive national conference, as proposed by the ECCAS Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Ndjamena on 21 October 2013. Thus, in a statement on 22 November 2013, the platform of the Organizations of Central Civil Society deemed it 'inappropriate (to hold) this inclusive national conference that can bring together the executioners and their victims'. It asked instead for the tabling of 'multiple resolutions on the Central African crisis', including the deployment of a multinational force with a strong mandate that would work in collaboration with the FACA to neutralise the ex-Seleka elements and restore security in Central Africa so that the CAR may find its place again in the international community. In addition, the civil society organisations asked that the DDR process be implemented urgently with the participation of all stakeholders in the country's socio-political life. 'Other organisations believe, however, [that the proposed ECCAS conference] must be the first national conference to ease the crisis.'

Moreover, it should be noted that religious leaders have been heavily involved in the search for solutions to ease the persisting sectarian tensions within the country.

Scenarios

The crisis in the CAR reached new dimensions with the advent of new actors in charge of the transition. The following is a list of potential scenarios.

Scenario 1

The newly elected Head of State of the Transition, Samba-Panza, is challenged by armed militias and loses the trust of the general population. Inter-religious violence persists in the capital and across the country. MISCA's shortage of staff does not allow the mission to fulfil its mandate. Armed groups attack the French soldiers supporting Operation Sangaris.

Scenario 2

The new Head of State of the Transition has difficulties mobilising the resources needed to carry out MISCA's mission and restore security and public order in the country. Despite decreasing tensions between Muslim and Christian communities, sporadic clashes persist because of reprisals and the settling of scores between fighters of the High Council of Resistance and National Recovery (an armed group of FACA officers) and their ex-Seleka foes. MISCA and Operation Sangaris encounter enormous difficulties in preventing attacks, disarming militants and restoring security in Bangui.

Scenario 3

With the support of religious leaders, the Head of State of the Transition manages to reduce community tensions as an important aspect of the transition. With the support of the troops of Operation Sangaris and MISCA the disarmament of militias and the reconstruction of the CAR national army are successful. The transitional authorities proceed with the state's recovery process and its return to public order and continue to prepare the way for free and fair elections in February 2015.

Options

The PSC could consider the following policy responses:

Option 1

The actions of the new Head of State of the Transition and the restoration of the rule of law in the CAR should remain at the heart of the AU's priorities. Thus, in coordination with the ECCAS Heads of State, the AU

must collaborate with the transitional authorities in the implementation of the road map for the transition and ensure the establishment of an inclusive government that takes into account all ethnic and religious sensitivities in the formulation of future national policies. Only a legitimate government can regain the trust of the population.

Option 2

The temporary deployment of Operation Sangaris and the presence of MISCA troops provide the CAR authorities with an opportunity to restore and strengthen the capacity of FACA. However, the AU should strengthen the capacity and operational capabilities of MISCA while learning from MICOPAX. The AU should also do everything possible to maintain the impartiality of MISCA staff in order to ensure public confidence, thereby guaranteeing the success of this mission.

Option 3

The transitional authorities should initiate a process of national reconciliation and inclusive dialogue, with the support of the international community, to restore confidence in government institutions. Religious and traditional leaders in the country can play a vital role in this regard.

Important dates

5 December 2013: An anti-Balaka militia attack leaves 138 dead in Bangui.

5 December 2013: The UN authorised the deployment of MISCA for a period of 12 months.

5 December 2013: Launch of the French military Operation Sangaris to help restore security in the country.

19 December 2013: Transformation of MICOPAX into MISCA.

10 January 2014: The leader of the transition, Djotodia, and his prime minister, Tiangaye, resign.

20 January 2014: The EU announces the deployment of troops in the CAR in support of the French forces.

20 January 2014: Samba-Panza, the mayor of Bangui, is elected Head of State of the Transition.

25 January 2014: Nzapayeké becomes Prime Minister.

Documents

Final Communiqué of the 6th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

Remarks by HE Ambassador Ahmad Allam-Mi, Secretary General of

ECCAS, during the ceremony of the official transfer of authority (TOA) between MICOPAX and MISCA, 19 December 2013

Communiqué of the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, 20 January 2014

Communiqué of the AU PSC, 413th meeting, Addis Ababa, 16 January 2014

Communiqué of the AU PSC, 411th meeting, Banjul, 30 December 2013

Communiqué of the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, 5 December 2013

Communiqué of the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, 22 November 2013

Country analysis

EGYPT

Previous AU/PSC communiqués

The crisis in Egypt in the post-Mubarak era has repeatedly featured on the agenda of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Peace and Security Council (PSC). In a press statement dated 3 July 2013, AUC Chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma called on all Egyptian parties and the people to work towards a resolution of the stalemate between the Muslim Brotherhood and the opposition through dialogue, in order to find an appropriate response to popular aspirations within the framework of legality and Egyptian institutions. The chairperson urged the parties to preserve the ideals and achievements of the Egyptian uprising of 2011 and stressed that the AU would not accept an unconstitutional change of government.

Subsequently, following the removal of President Mohamed Morsi by the Egyptian military on 3 July 2013, Egypt was discussed at the PSC meeting PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLXXXIV) held on 5 July 2013. The Council listened to a briefing made by the Commissioner for Political Affairs on the situation in Egypt, as well as the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the AU. The meeting, which was also attended by Dr Dlamini-Zuma, agreed that overthrowing a democratically elected president 'does not conform to the relevant provisions of the Egyptian Constitution and, therefore, falls under the definition of an unconstitutional change of government'. The Council referred to the relevant AU instruments on unconstitutional changes of government, notably the Lomé

Declaration of July 2000 and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of January 2007, and decided to suspend Egypt's participation in the AU's future activities until the restoration of constitutional order.

The situation in Egypt was also discussed by the PSC at its meeting held at ministerial level on 29 July 2013. The Council was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the situation in Egypt and on the follow-up to communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLXXXIV) adopted at its 384th meeting on 5 July 2013. In a communiqué that followed the meeting, the Council commended the AUC chairperson's establishment of the AU High-Level Panel for Egypt, comprising former President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali as Chair, former President Festus Mogae of Botswana and former Djiboutian Prime Minister Dileita Mohamed Dileita. The Council expressed deep concern about the incidents of violence in Cairo and other Egyptian cities, and called on all parties to show the utmost restraint and place the interest of Egypt and its people above any other consideration.

On 14 August 2013, the AU High-Level Panel for Egypt briefed the PSC on political and security developments and the efforts of the Panel within the framework of its mandate. The Council commended the work of the Panel, but noted the worsening situation on the ground. The meeting of the PSC on 16 August 2013 discussed the increasing violence in Egypt and urged the interim authorities and the Muslim Brotherhood to avoid violence and casualties. The Council also called on the AU's bilateral and multilateral partners to lend their full support to the High-Level Panel to facilitate 'a consensual way' out of the stalemate. In an effort to resolve the crisis, the AU High-Level Panel for Egypt met Egyptian authorities and other stakeholders.

Crisis escalation potential

The third anniversary of the revolution that overthrew long-time ruler President Hosni Mubarak was marred by numerous bombings, protests and killings. On 25 January 2014 the Egyptian Ministry of Health announced that at least 49 people had been killed during rival rallies on the anniversary of the 2011 popular uprising. Clashes were reported between groups backing the military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and supporters of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, who also clashed with the security forces.

A day before the anniversary, a series of bombings targeting security institutions rocked Cairo. Reports claimed that six people were killed and more than 100 wounded. The biggest of the explosions targeted the police headquarters in Cairo and left four people dead and more than 70 wounded, while two other explosions took place in other parts of Cairo. The al-Qaeda-inspired militant group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis ('Champions of Jerusalem') claimed responsibility for the biggest attack. This Sinai-based group previously bombed a security building in the northern city of Mansoura in December, killing 16 people and injuring more than 100.

The series of bombings in the heart of Cairo complicates the political process in Egypt and further polarises a society that is already deeply divided. Despite its strong condemnation of the attacks and denial of any connection to the explosions, the interim authorities have blamed the Muslim Brotherhood for the bombings. Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and independent analysts fear that the attack may provide added incentives for a further crackdown by interim government forces on the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters.

The differences between and divisions among the various Islamic groups and the interim government in Egypt are wide and can be expected to increase over time. Polarised views dominate the public, political and media spheres of Egyptian society. Major parties and role players have a deep mistrust of one another and exhibit fundamental differences about values and how to build the future of a democratic Egypt. A significant number of liberal and secular elements in Egyptian society feel sidelined by the military and oppose the intrusive role of the army in public life and politics. The youth-led April 6 Movement that took a leading part in the January 2011 revolution have also boycotted the referendum.

The designation of the Muslim Brotherhood and its social and financial structures as a terrorist organisation could radicalise its members and supporters, and push them to violent confrontations with the security forces. The recurring terrorist attacks targeting the security forces and the heavy-handed response by interim government forces could further weaken the security situation. In the absence of meaningful dialogue and compromise, such differences and potential causes of conflict could further destabilise the nation. The crisis could easily have regional implications should Islamic groups in neighbouring countries choose to assist the Muslim Brotherhood. The possibility of al-Sisi running for the presidency could further complicate Egypt's status at the AU and ensure the country's increased diplomatic isolation.

Key issues and internal dynamics

Last month's referendum on the new constitution, which was boycotted by the Muslim Brotherhood, was much more than a process intended to approve the Egyptian government's constitutional mandate. The country's interim leaders saw the vote as a popular endorsement of their road map for Egypt. Egypt's President Adly Mansour said that the support for the new constitution was a milestone in the transition to democracy. The new constitution was approved by more than 98 per cent of voters, with a turnout of about 39 per cent. The constitution, written by a panel dominated by secularists, is designed to replace the

first post-Mubarak constitution that was approved by a mostly Islamist committee under the Muslim Brotherhood, with a 33 per cent voter turnout.

The 50-member constitution-drafting committee was led by the former Egyptian Foreign Minister and former head of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. According to the new document, the president may serve two four-year terms and can be impeached by parliament. It retains Islam as a state religion while guaranteeing absolute freedom of belief and gender equality. One of the contentious sections is the power given to the military to appoint the defence minister for the next eight years. Dealing a blow to Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood and its Freedom and Justice Party, the new constitution bans political parties constituted on the basis of religion, gender, race or geography. Although the turnout of the most recent referendum was bigger than the one that took place under Morsi, figures show that only 16 per cent of Egypt's rural population voted, thereby confirming yet another aspect of the existing deep divisions within Egyptian society.

According to the road map of the interim government, the next step will be to hold the presidential and parliamentary elections in mid-2014. There is a strong possibility that al-Sisi will run for the presidency. Numerous groups are initiating a campaign to raise support for his candidacy and his victory is virtually assured if he runs. However, such a development would further complicate Egypt's international relations, specifically its readmission to the AU. The principles of the AU on democracy, elections and governance strongly reject the participation in elections and in the post-election government by parties who took part in unconstitutional changes of government.

The political and security situation in Egypt remains fragile. The current government's designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group automatically excludes the group from the political process. The imprisonment and trials of thousands of high-ranking Muslim Brotherhood leaders and supporters, including Morsi, also complicates reaching a negotiated end to the crisis. Many fear that the continuous crackdown on Islamic groups and

their financial and social structures will radicalise their support base, thereby leading to further violence and instability which in return would allow the military to take a more visible role in the politics and public life of Egyptian society. The past few months have witnessed an increase in bomb attacks targeting mainly security institutions and personnel across Egypt.

One of the groups emerging as a visible threat to the security of the Egyptian state is Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, which was previously known for launching attacks against Israeli targets and interests. Following the ouster of the Islamist Morsi, the group started directing its violence at the Egyptian army and police and has claimed responsibility for the 24 January bomb attack on the police headquarters in Cairo. In one of its most high-profile attacks, the group also tried to assassinate Interior Minister Muhammad Ibrahim in September 2013, when his motorcade in Cairo was targeted by a car bomb. There are allegations that Ansar Beit al-Maqdis has links to the Muslim Brotherhood and to Palestinian militant groups, especially Hamas.

Criticism of the ongoing political process in Egypt does not only come from Islamic groups. Secular and liberal elements that participated actively in the popular uprising that overthrew Mubarak claim that the constitution favours the army at the expense of the people, and fails to deliver on the promises of the revolution of 2011. Recent months have seen a crackdown on the international and local news media, considered by the government as Muslim Brotherhood sympathisers. Many have accused the army of taking Egypt back to the Mubarak era. Al-Sisi's possible presidency would seem to give weight to such concerns.

Geopolitical dynamics

Africa and RECs

The AU High-Level Panel for Egypt, established by the AUC Chairperson to deal with the crisis in Egypt, has held a number of meetings in Addis Ababa and Cairo and undertook a fact-finding mission to Egypt. The High-Level Panel had discussions with key Egyptian officials, including President Mansour, Interim Vice Prime Minister and Defence Minister al-Sisi, and Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy. The panel also met Morsi and

visited the al-Rabaa Adawiya neighbourhood in Cairo to meet representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood. Egyptian civil society was also part of the discussions, but is yet to come up with a tangible agreed-upon road map to resolve the internal crisis and improve AU-Egyptian relations.

Recent months have witnessed an increased push from Cairo for readmission to the AU. Fahmy has urged the AU to restore Egypt's membership. In a visit to Algiers the minister said that the decision of the AU was wrong and 'did not take into consideration the specific circumstances that Egypt was facing'. He also called on the PSC 'to review the decision quickly'.

The AU is faced with the challenge of defining what constitutes a popular uprising and what does not. The PSC convened a meeting on 5 July 2013 to discuss this challenge. The meeting acknowledged the need to consider lessons learned from all cases of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, as well as the definition and status of popular uprisings or revolutions.

United Nations

On 23 January UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Egyptians to mark the third anniversary of their revolution by renewing their commitment to 'peaceful dialogue and non-violence based on pluralism with political space for all'. He emphasised the 'crucial need to guarantee the political space on which a stable and inclusive democracy can be built'. He also proposed that a national independent fact-finding committee be set up with the remit to gather evidence on the events of 30 June 2011, which '[could] be an opportunity to combat impunity and to ensure effective investigation and prosecution of those responsible for serious violations of international law'. On 24 January 2014, Ban also condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Cairo.

International community

Egypt's relations with one of its long-time allies, the United States (US), have deteriorated since Morsi's removal from power in July 2013. The past few months have seen strident exchanges between Cairo and Washington concerning the US' aid package to Egypt and the prevailing human rights conditions

in Egypt. Egypt was excluded from the invitations that President Barack Obama extended to leaders of 47 African countries to attend a US-Africa White House summit on 5-6 August 2014. However, this omission seems to be due primarily to Egypt's current suspension from all AU activities. US Republican Senator John McCain has also been very critical of developments in Egypt and recently called for the release of Australian journalist Peter Grete and his Al Jazeera colleagues, who are being detained by Egyptian authorities.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, has commended the constitutional referendum process, but said she expected it to usher in civilian leadership. She also welcomed the perception that the vote had taken place 'in a largely orderly manner', while noting in her statement that the turnout was officially recorded at under 40 per cent. Ashton said the EU could not verify alleged irregularities, but expressed the view that 'these [alleged irregularities] do not appear to have fundamentally affected the outcome'.

Civil society

Amnesty International has condemned the interim government's period in office as one of 'unprecedented' violence. It has accused troops of regularly committing abuses and said rights and liberties in the country were being eroded.

Scenarios

Developments in Egypt could follow any one of a number of different paths, depending on the actions of a variety of role players. These are some possible scenarios.

Scenario 1

Continuing accusations and violence between the polarised parties in Egyptian politics could lead to a further escalation of violence and unrest, thereby damaging the economy and any hopes for peace and security. Marginalised Islamic groups and sidelined liberal groups could further harm national unity and the democratisation process.

Scenario 2

A victory by al-Sisi in the presidential election could further complicate Egypt's relations with the West and the AU. Such a scenario would

exacerbate prolonged and complex tensions with the AU, effectively resulting in Egypt's diplomatic isolation in Africa.

Scenario 3

The designation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group, coupled with recent terrorist attacks and the heavy-handed response of Egypt's security forces, could create an unending cycle of violence and terror in Egypt.

Scenario 4

The establishment of a civilian government through democratic elections could ease tensions in Egypt and help improve its international standing.

Options

Given the above scenarios, the following options could be considered by the PSC to support the democratic transition in Egypt:

Option 1

The PSC could follow the developments in Egypt closely and continue to send members of the Panel of the Wise and the AU High-Level Panel for Egypt to help facilitate the political transition in the country.

Option 2

The PSC could urge the interim government to request an independent inquiry into the violence that resulted in the deaths of a number of peaceful protesters.

Option 3

The PSC could further debate and discuss what constitutes popular uprisings and revolutions and what does not. Having acceptable definitions of these terms would help avoid any confusion about what actually happened in Egypt.

Documentation

AU Documents

PSC/PR/BR.(CCXCIX) (22 October 2011) press statement on the situation in Egypt

PSC/PR/COMM.(CCLX) (16 February 2011) communiqué on the situation in Egypt

Important dates to diarise

6	February	International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (WHO)
20	February	World Day of Social Justice
8	March	International Women's Day
21	March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
22	March	World Water Day
25	March	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
7	April	Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwandan Genocide
29	April	Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Chemical Warfare
7-9	May	World Economic Forum on Africa 2014, Abuja, Nigeria

Country	Election	Date *
Comoros	Assembly	February 2014
Egypt	House of Representatives	February / March 2014
Guinea-Bissau	Presidential National Assembly Senate	16 March 2014 16 March 2014 16 March 2014
Algeria	Presidential	17 April 2014
South Africa	Presidential National Assembly Provincial	April / May 2014 April / May 2014 April / May 2014
Malawi	Presidential National Assembly Local	20 May 2014 20 May 2014 20 May 2014

**could change, dependent on circumstances*

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