

In this issue

■ Addis Insight

The decision by the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) to deploy a humanitarian mission against the spread of **Ebola** is a first for the AU. The ball is now in the AU Commission's court to get doctors, nurses and paramedics on the ground as soon as possible.

■ On the Agenda

The PSC has received a report from the AU Commission on the situation in the **Central African Republic** and on its African-led International Support Mission in the CAR.

The deteriorating situation in **Libya** is a priority for the AU and has been the object of several discussions and meetings of the PSC. The PSC recently called for an urgent ceasefire and the holding of a national dialogue involving all stakeholders in Libya.

■ Situation Analysis

The PSC's planned visit to **South Sudan** has been postponed amidst deepening concern about the failure of warring parties to stick to the numerous ceasefire agreements.



Peace & Security Council Report

“ Ebola is not just a public emergency

Page 2

“ The Brazzaville ceasefire, although critical, remains fragile

Page 5

“ The UN is warning of an imminent famine in South Sudan

Page 13



Addis Insight

AU to deploy a humanitarian mission to fight Ebola in West Africa

The AU is planning to send doctors and nurses, as well as military personnel to the countries affected by Ebola. Implementation, however, will be a huge challenge for the AU.

In an unprecedented step, the first of its kind in the history of the AU, the PSC has decided to deploy a humanitarian mission to help end the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus. At its 450th meeting on 19 August 2014, which coincided with World Humanitarian Day, the PSC authorised the first AU humanitarian intervention by mandating 'the immediate deployment of an AU-led military and civilian humanitarian mission, comprising medical doctors, nurses and other medical and paramedical personnel, as well as military personnel, as required for the effectiveness and protection of the mission.'

Underscoring the urgency of the matter, the PSC tasked the AU Commission to promptly prepare the necessary concept of operations for the speedy deployment of the mission.

The Ebola virus has left over 1 400 people dead with over 3 000 known cases, according to figures released on 27 August by the World Health

designated a public health emergency of international concern on 8 August 2014. Since the first case was reported earlier in the year in Guinea, the outbreak has spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone, with a concerning number of cases also reported in Lagos, Nigeria.

A separate strain of the virus has been detected in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

A blow to poor countries

Among these countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the worst affected. In these countries and in Guinea, the Ebola outbreak is not just a public health emergency. It also affects economic activities and social stability, and thus poses a serious security threat. There is genuine concern that the outbreak, if unchecked for too long, could have a negative impact on the stability of these countries. This may apply to the DRC as well if the outbreak in that country runs out of control.

Current PSC Chair:

H.E Ahmat Awad Sakine,
Ambassador of Chad and
Permanent Representative to
the AU and UNECA

Current members of the PSC:

Algeria, Burundi, Chad,
Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea,
The Gambia, Guinea, Libya,
Mozambique, Namibia, Niger,
Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania,
Uganda

The decision of the PSC was informed as much by security concerns as by the medical emergency created by the Ebola outbreak

Organization (WHO) in its 'road map' to end the crisis. However, there are fears that the epidemic has affected far more people than reported. The Ebola outbreak was formally

The historic decision the PSC adopted at its 450th meeting was informed as much by these security concerns as by the medical emergency created by the Ebola outbreak. Accordingly,

the PSC drew attention to the fact that ‘three of [the] affected countries are in a post-conflict situation, and that the epidemic has the potential of undermining the tremendous progress made by these countries over the past few years’. It urged for renewed effort both within Africa and from partners in combating the epidemic.

In terms of the fight against the Ebola outbreak, apart from the

stipulates that one of its functions relates to ‘humanitarian action and disaster management’. Similarly, Article 7 states that the PSC shall ‘support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflicts or major natural disasters’. Despite such a clear mandate, the actual operationalisation of this mandate by the PSC has been limited in action and ad hoc in approach.

Being the first such mission by the AU, its actual operationalisation will not be an easy exercise

problems caused by the general lack of preparedness of the health facilities in these countries, more treatment centres, logistical assets and health workers are desperately needed, according to the humanitarian aid organisation Médecins Sans Frontières. The WHO says that up to US\$430 million is needed in the fight against the outbreak. Earlier, on

While the PSC has taken the important first step in authorising the deployment of a humanitarian mission, the actual value of this decision lies in its swift implementation and the effectiveness of the mission. Being the first such mission by the AU, its actual operationalisation will not be an easy exercise.

Given the huge demand for health workers and treatment centres, it could contribute to the fight against Ebola

14 August, the AU pledged to contribute \$1 million from its Humanitarian Fund to help those countries affected by the virus.

Welcome action from the PSC

This is perhaps the most substantive decision the PSC has taken in acting on its mandate under Articles 6 and 7 of the PSC Protocol since it became operational in 2004. As such, it is a very welcome action. Given the huge demand for health workers and treatment centres, it could contribute to the fight against Ebola, particularly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, if and when the mission is deployed.

Article 6 of the PSC Protocol, which defines the functions of the PSC,

Issues ranging from identifying and mobilising personnel, logistics and funding to the actual deployment and operationalisation of the mission in the three affected countries need to be settled. The necessary consultations with the Economic Community of West African States and the authorities in the affected countries should also be finalised. The ball is now in the AU Commission’s court.

\$430
MILLION

THE AMOUNT NEEDED TO
FIGHT EBOLA

\$1
MILLION

THE AU CONTRIBUTION SO FAR



On the Agenda

Winding down the AU mission to the CAR

On the eve of the deployment of a new UN peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic (CAR) on 15 September, the AU PSC is discussing the situation in the war-torn CAR. Lessons learnt from the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA) and challenges ahead for the AU presence in the country are expected to be on the agenda.

On 27 August 2014, the PSC received a report from the AU Commission (AUC) Chairperson, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, on the situation in the CAR. It also included an assessment of the work of MISCA. This was ahead of the anticipated transfer on 15 September 2014 of peacekeeping in the CAR to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA).

A number of issues are of concern to the members of the PSC. One of these is the follow-up to and implementation of the ceasefire signed between the Séléka and anti-balaka rebels on 23 July.

Hailed by the AUC Chairperson as a significant step forward in the search for a lasting solution to the crisis in the CAR, the cessation of hostilities agreement was signed

and cantonment and the need for an inclusive government.

While the Brazzaville ceasefire marks a major step forward, it remains very fragile. Its success depends on an agreement on the formula and make-up of an inclusive transitional government consisting of the interim government, the Séléka and the anti-balaka rebels. Although the Interim President, Catherine Samba-Panza, had disbanded her government in an effort to give way to a unity government and announced the appointment of Mahamat Kamoun as the country's first Muslim prime minister on 10 August, the Séléka rejected the appointment, saying it had not been consulted in the process.

The continued violence being reported in the capital Bangui and other parts of the CAR is another major concern.

MISCA

AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL
SUPPORT MISSION TO THE
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

MINUSCA

UNITED NATIONS
MULTIDIMENSIONAL INTEGRATED
STABILISATION MISSION IN THE
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The AUC Chairperson's report is expected to offer some details on the Brazzaville process

after the reconciliation conference, involving 169 representatives of government, rebels and civil society. The conference, held from 21 to 23 July in Brazzaville, had been facilitated by the AU and the countries of the region. The AUC Chairperson's report is expected to offer some details on the Brazzaville process and its follow-up, including disarmament

Civilians bear the brunt of this violence as both the anti-balaka and the Séléka rebels continue to clash along sectarian lines.

On 17 August, 34 people were reportedly killed in a remote territory about 350km north of Bangui by the predominantly Muslim Séléka. Following the death of a man in the PK-5 neighbourhood, home to the

2 000 Muslims who have braved the sectarian violence to remain in Bangui, 30 people were injured, 10 of them seriously, in fighting between local militia and the European Union Force.

Following widespread attacks, the majority of Muslims in the country have been forced to flee. With most of the Muslim community having fled

violence in and around Mbres (Nana-Gribizi Province) during the week of 18 August and reported attacks against civilians created new displacements in the region. Human rights violations, including murder, rape, torture, arbitrary arrest and the recruitment of child soldiers, remain a serious problem. Women and children are particularly affected.

These developments show that the political process faces serious hurdles and that the Brazzaville ceasefire, although critical, remains fragile

from Bangui and other areas, seeking refuge in those parts of the country under Séléka control, a de facto division of the country has emerged, reinforcing the sectarian divide. This division has also helped the Séléka to exploit the mines in the territories under its control, raising the issue of illicit trade in minerals to fund its rebellion. Although the Séléka abandoned its call for the partition of the country at the time of the conference in Brazzaville, Nouredine Adam, the deputy head of the organisation, announced the establishment of an independent state in north-eastern CAR on 17 August.

MISCA saved lives

Another major issue concerns the MISCA forces. The AU has highlighted the protection MISCA has offered to internally displaced people in camps; the escort it provided to civilians in need of protection; and the contribution it made to the relative improvement in security in parts of the CAR, including Bangui, Bambari and Boda (this despite major incidents of violence in June perpetrated by both factions).

There is also concern about the operational issues that the mission continues to face, including gaps in capability, equipment, coordination

One of the challenges that the mission encountered was the violent attacks targeting MISCA troops

These developments show that the political process faces serious hurdles and that the Brazzaville ceasefire, although critical, remains fragile.

The humanitarian situation also remains dire. Around 1 million people are internally displaced, including more than 100 000 in Bangui. A large majority of the displaced are Muslim. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs,

and the implementation of its mandate.

One of the challenges that the mission encountered was the violent attacks targeting MISCA troops. On 29 May the AU Special Representative to the CAR and the head of MISCA, Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, noted with concern the increasing attacks on MISCA forces. He said the mission had suffered 27 losses to its ranks

100 000

PEOPLE DISPLACED IN BANGUI

and that 166 soldiers had been injured since its deployment in December 2013.

Human rights concerns

Another concern for the AU relates to the investigation of alleged human rights violations involving MISCA

for the transition. Many PSC members – notably those from the Economic Community of Central African States and from troop- and police-contributing countries – would like to know more about certain issues regarding the preparations.

There may also be some interest in plans by the AUC to conduct a workshop on lessons learnt

forces. In addition to the alleged violations by Chadian forces on 29 March in a Bangui market, the fallout of which resulted in the withdrawal of Chadian forces from MISCA, forces from the Republic of Congo have also been implicated

These issues include the liquidation of MISCA, the distribution of assets and the transfer of MISCA troops and other personnel into MINUSCA on the basis of agreed processes and frameworks. There may also be some interest in plans by the AUC

The form and nature of the AU's continued presence in the CAR after the transition is of particular interest to the PSC

in the disappearance of at least 11 people in Boali, 80km north of Bangui. In a press release issued on 3 June 2014, the AUC Chairperson noted that a joint investigation had been initiated by the human rights component and judicial police officers of MISCA to shed light on the allegations.

to conduct a workshop on lessons learnt, which could help in shaping the continued role of the AU in the CAR.

Finally, the form and nature of the AU's continued presence in the CAR after the transition is of particular interest to the PSC.

The Special Representative issued a press release on 16 July announcing the temporary suspension of the commander who led the MISCA unit in Boali and the redeployment of all the soldiers of the unit who had been in this locality at the time of the incident to facilitate the completion of the investigation.

As the transition from MISCA to MINUSCA approaches, an issue of particular concern is the preparations

15

SEPTEMBER 2014

EXPECTED HANDOVER FROM
MISCA TO MINUSCA



On the Agenda

PSC to consider urgent need for a ceasefire in Libya

As Libya descends into chaos, with rival militia's engaging in intense fighting, the PSC needs to consider urgent action to establish a ceasefire and draw up a roadmap to establish peace and security.

In mid-July fighting erupted in Libya's capital Tripoli over control of the airport between the Misrata militia, suspected of being aligned with Libya's Muslim Brotherhood, and the Zintan militia, loyal to General Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, who has declared 'war against terrorists in Libya'. The fighting resulted in the death of a large number of people, the destruction of 90% of aircraft at Tripoli airport and the suspension of flights to and from the airport. On 2 August, rockets hit Tripoli's main fuel depot near the airport, setting a gasoline tank ablaze, with the fire quickly spreading to seven other tanks. The following day the Libyan government warned of the risk of a humanitarian and environmental disaster as fears mounted of the gas tanks' exploding.

have suspended their operations and evacuated their staff and citizens from the country.

The fighting, which has continued into a third week in the two cities, has killed more than 200 people. In the latest round of fighting in Tripoli the government reported the death of 22 people on 3 August. In a development bound to aggravate the crisis, Ansar al-Sharia, an Islamist militant group suspected of perpetrating the attack on the US consulate in 2012, declared Benghazi an 'Islamic Emirate' after claiming to have taken total control of Libya's second largest city on 31 July 2014. This is alarming to neighbouring countries as well as Western powers concerned about the rise of militant Islamist groups in Libya. In a statement

Libya has been rocked by violence and fighting between rival armed groups, but the recent fighting is the worst since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi



Fighting escalates

Libya has been rocked by violence and fighting between rival armed groups, but the recent fighting is the worst since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi. With genuine fears of the country descending into a full-scale civil war, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has decided to evacuate its personnel and embassies from around the world

that gave rise to fears of an Egyptian military intervention in Libya, Egypt's former foreign minister and the former secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, urged Egypt to consider a military response to the crisis in Libya.

Proliferation of armed groups

One of the major consequences of the Libyan civil war in 2011 has been the

emergence and proliferation of a large number of armed groups that have established control over various parts of the country. While there are differing accounts of the amount of armed militias in Libya, it is believed that there could be as many as 1 700. The major armed groups include the Misrata militia, authorised by the government in 2013 to bolster security in Tripoli; the Zintan, a powerful Bedouin tribal militia whose commanders lead the Qaqaa militia, an 18 000-strong force opposed to the influence of the Misrata militia; and the Supreme Security Committee (SSC), which operates as a de facto police and has an alliance with the Misrata militia against the Zintan.

While these militia groups defy integration into a unified national security architecture, many of them are recognised and funded by various government agencies.

The fighting has mostly affected the eastern city of Benghazi and the capital Tripoli. Of the numerous militia groups in Benghazi, the two best-known ones are the February 17 Martyrs Brigade and the Ansar al-Sharia militia. Similarly, in Tripoli rival militias control various neighbourhoods with the dominant Zintan and Misrata militia fighting for supremacy. With an estimated 40 000 fighters, the Misrata represents the largest militia group in the country.

Political divisions

Since the fall of Gaddafi, one of the major political divisions that have come to shape Libyan politics has been between the Coalition of National Forces (CNF) and the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party (JCP). While the rivalry between these two political forces has paralysed the General National Council (GNC, the parliament

elected in 2012) and the government, rival militia groups have backed both.

The recent fighting in Tripoli came against the background of two major recent developments. Haftar, with the support of army elements, launched a military operation against what he called 'terrorists' on 16 May 2014. Since then, Islamist militias operating in Benghazi have come under a lot of pressure. Despite their control of

While these militia groups defy integration into a unified national security architecture, many of them are recognised and funded by various government agencies

the leadership in parliament and the caretaker head of state, and despite the fact that they dominate the GNC, the Islamists suffered a clear defeat in the elections held at the end of May 2014.

Amid the escalating armed confrontation in the east of the country and the losses that Islamists have

The Islamists suffered a clear defeat in the elections held at the end of May 2014

suffered on the political front, the Misrata militia has intensified its battle to gain the upper hand in Tripoli. It launched an attack to dislodge the Zintan militia, affiliated with Haftar, that has been controlling Tripoli airport. The ensuing fighting involving heavy weaponry killed scores of people, and damaged over 20 aircraft and the air traffic control centre.

In the meantime, the newly elected parliament, the House of Representatives replacing the GNC, held its first session on 4 August 2014 in Tobruk, 1 500km from Tripoli, in a ceremony at which members took the oath in the presence of representatives of the Arab League, the United

Nations (UN) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Reflecting the ideological and political divisions that characterise post-Gaddafi Libya, Islamist MPs and their allies from the western city of Misrata boycotted the Tobruk ceremony, branding it 'anti-constitutional'.

The House of Representatives has made changes to an earlier constitutional declaration, giving itself

more powers that it said would help it rein in the out-of-control militias. It also called for national unity, an immediate and urgent end to the violence, and the observance of the ceasefire by all the armed groups in the country.

Islamists take Benghazi

On the same day that the new parliament met in Tobruk, Islamist

militias took control of several army bases in Benghazi. Although denied by Haftar and government forces, having lost the fight to Islamist forces, Haftar's forces were forced out of Benghazi, with Haftar himself reportedly fleeing to Egypt. In an alarming new development, after seizing Benghazi the Islamist group Ansar al-Sharia declared the city an 'Islamic Emirate' and seized the military barracks.

The picture that emerges from the above is the convergence of the political and ideological divisions in the country with the armed confrontation between rival armed militias. Unless an inclusive political process that accommodates the Islamist groups

is established and all militia groups are convinced to join the unified national security architecture, the current violence is likely to push the country into full-scale anarchy and civil war. Compounding this situation is the risk of terrorist groups gaining ground in the country and regional and international actors' support for armed forces perceived to be anti-Islamist, such as those aligned with Haftar.

Increasing regional and African concerns

Egypt's state-run news agency reported that 11 000 Egyptians recently fled Libya, crossing the

country may become a safe haven for terrorist groups.

In an attempt to coordinate their responses, neighbouring states held a series of meetings in recent months. Following their consultative meeting in Algiers on the margin of the 17th ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries on 27–28 May 2014, at which the AU was represented, the countries held a follow-up meeting in Hammamet, Tunisia on 13–14 July 2014. At this meeting they established a political working group led by Egypt and a security working group led by Algeria.

The House of Representatives has made changes to an earlier constitutional declaration, giving itself more powers

eastern Saloum border into Egypt. Fears that the crisis could spill over the border heightened following the killing of 21 Egyptian soldiers near the Libyan border. After weeks of reports that Cairo considered a military intervention in Egypt, Moussa on 4 August said in a statement that 'the situation in Libya poses a threat to Egyptian security' and 'Egypt may have to exercise the right to self-defence'. Following attempts by Egyptian and other foreign nationals to break through a border post amid huge refugee flows from Libya, Tunisia sealed its border with Libya on 2 August.

Concerns about the regional consequences of the Libyan crisis are in part due to the fragile security situation in North Africa and the Sahel, and the presence of Islamist terrorist groups and organised criminal networks engaged in smuggling. Other neighbours of Libya, including Algeria, Mali and Niger, are alarmed by recent events in Libya, not least because of the flow of arms and fears that the

On its part, the AU sent its Special Representative to Libya to Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Niger from 10–26 July 2014 and held consultations with representatives of these countries. Following the recent spike in violence, the AU Commission Chairperson issued a press statement calling for the lasting cessation of hostilities between the warring parties and an inclusive dialogue to re-launch and complete the transition in Libya. Although it has been several weeks since the start of the recent fighting, the PSC has not yet responded to the events in Libya.

UN withdrawal of personnel

The violence in Libya forced the UNSMIL to start withdrawing its staff in early July. Although it initially said it would keep a core team to continue operations, it announced on 14 July that everyone was to leave due to the 'prevailing security conditions'. In a press statement on 17 July condemning the recent violence in Libya, the UN Security



LARGEST LIBYAN MILITIAS: MISRATA (PRO-ISLAMIST) VS ZINTAN

1 700

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ARMED GROUPS IN LIBYA

Council expressed its concern over the 'prolonged pattern of politically motivated and inter-militia violence'.

Confirming earlier reports that Libya needs robust support, in an address to the UN Security Council on 17 July Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Abdulaziz called for the establishment, under Chapter VII, of a UN stabilisation and institution-building mission for Libya.

Further international response

The embassies of a number of countries, including the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), France and Turkey, have suspended their operations in Tripoli and evacuated their staff and nationals from the country. Several international organisations have also suspended or cancelled their operations in Libya. These include the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières and the Danish Refugee Council.

On 6 August Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and the US, issued a joint statement expressing their deep concern and calling on all parties in Libya to adopt an immediate ceasefire and undertake negotiations to address the country's security and stability needs. The statement confirmed their support for the democratically elected institutions of Libya and their rejection of outside interference.

There have been reports that Haftar receives support from several countries, including Egypt. In the light of Egypt's domestic crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been branded a terrorist group, Egypt's support for the anti-Islamist Haftar does not come as a surprise. Other countries reportedly supporting Haftar include the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the US.

Major issues for the PSC

The on-going fighting between the rival armed groups, the ideological and political divisions feeding the conflict, and the lack of effective state authority to ensure law and order constitute the major issues that are of concern to the PSC.

Major concerns for the PSC are the risk of the conflict spilling over Libya's borders into neighbouring countries and avoiding external intervention in Libya

In this context, a further issue for the PSC is creating the conditions for an agreement on a ceasefire; a road map for inclusive national dialogue and the completion of the transitional process, including consolidating the authority of the parliament and its government; and the completion of the constitution-making process.

The PSC could consider facilitating the establishment of an international contact group on Libya

The PSC could consider facilitating, in consultation with the UN and the Arab League, the establishment of an international contact group on Libya for mobilising coordinated international action pushing for a ceasefire and an inclusive political process.

The PSC could task the AU Commission to establish a mechanism, as part of the role of the AU Special Representative to Libya, to closely monitor the effects of the conflict in Libya on neighbouring countries in North Africa and the Sahel and regularly report to it on this issue.

Other major concerns for the PSC are the risk of the conflict spilling over Libya's borders into neighbouring countries and avoiding external military intervention in Libya.

Options for the PSC

The PSC could urge the parties that there is no military solution to the political and security challenges facing Libya and affirm the AU's rejection of any external military intervention in Libya.

The PSC could call on the AU Commission, working through the Special Representative and in collaboration with partners such as the UN and the Arab League, to develop a proposal for a national conference on peace and security in Libya that will bring together all armed forces in the country.



Situation Analysis

Continued frustration over 'senseless killing' in South Sudan

Amid the continued violation of ceasefire agreements, the priority for the PSC is to ensure that the parties honour their commitments under the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA), that they stop further fighting, and that a mechanism for enforcing these commitments is put in place.

With no progress achieved since its last session on South Sudan on 12 June 2014, the PSC on 21 August held a session on the current situation in the country and the challenges facing the peace process.

During its 12 June session, the PSC expressed its deep concern over the failure of 'both the government and the SPLM/A in Opposition [SPLM/A-IO] to meaningfully move forward the peace process and bring an end to the senseless killing of innocent civilians'. The PSC also strongly condemned 'the continued and flagrant violations of the CHA' and 'the widespread atrocities and abuses committed by all sides against innocent civilians'. Demanding that the parties end the fighting and show the required political will to advance the political process, the PSC expressed its readiness to

Chairperson Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma called on the South Sudanese parties, in particular the SPLM/A-IO, to comply fully with all the agreements they had signed. The statement also stressed the urgency of finding a lasting solution to the conflict and reconvening the political talks to facilitate the early establishment of the transitional government, as envisaged in the 9 May and 10 June agreements.

Escalation of violence

The 20 July fighting in Nasir was the first major confrontation since June and resulted in further internal displacement and the flight of refugees to neighbouring Ethiopia. On 15 August fighting broke out again around the town of Bentiu, the capital of the northern oil state of Unity, as well as in the Ayod region of Jonglei state.

WHO LEADS THE CONFLICT?



SALVA KIIR – PRESIDENT OF SOUTH SUDAN



RIEK MACHAR – LEADER OF SPLM/A IN OPPOSITION

Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma called on the South Sudanese parties to comply fully with all the agreements they had signed

'take targeted sanctions and other measures against any party that continues to undermine the search for a solution to the conflict and fails to honour its commitments'.

Condemning the SPLM/A-IO's attack on Nasir town on 20 July as a violation of the CHA in a 21 July press release, African Union Commission (AUC)

As with previous instances, the two sides accused each other of initiating hostilities and violating the CHA.

Rebel spokesperson Lul Ruai Koang claimed that the attack was the start of the long-awaited government offensive, while army spokesperson Joseph Marier Samuel said government troops acted in self-

defence after the rebels had launched a dawn attack in Ayod. Fighting was reported to have continued for several hours in Bentiu around the key airport zone outside the town, close to a United Nations (UN) base that shelters more than 40 000 people fleeing the conflict. The city, now under government control, has changed hands several times since the civil war broke out in December 2013.

The parties to the conflict continue to hold to their divergent positions and seem unwilling to end the conflict through negotiation. The ceasefire breach and the subsequent accusations and counter-accusations have become a common cycle. Both parties also continue to make media statements rejecting responsibility, which fuel further hostilities. The humanitarian situation has reached an alarming stage with the UN warning of a serious famine affecting millions in the country. With little progress having been made in the mediation process, the volatile conditions are set to continue, leading to further deterioration of the dire humanitarian situation.

A peace process facing collapse?

The conflicting parties had signed a deal on 9 May 2014 committing

In an apparent demonstration of both sides' preference for a military solution, reports say that they continue to mobilise weapons and fighters. According to a Human Rights Watch report released on 7 August, South Sudan has bought large quantities of weapons since the conflict began, including from China. The fighting that erupted in Nasir and Bentiu offers further evidence of their unrealistic hopes of winning the war through military means. The recent flare-up of fighting also shows the parties' continued disregard for international humanitarian law and human rights.

The mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which had been postponed indefinitely after 23 June following objections from the SPLM/A-IO on the participation and representivity of civil society in the talks, resumed on 4 August. However, the following day representatives of the SPLM/A-IO failed to attend the talks, bringing them to the brink of total collapse. Although the peace talks continued with the participation of the SPLM/A-IO in the following days, they still face a number of challenges including objections from government on procedures.

4
MILLION
PEOPLE

FACING HUNGER IN SOUTH SUDAN



MEMBERS OF IGAD: DJIBOUTI, ERITREA, ETHIOPIA, KENYA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN, UGANDA

Neither the South Sudanese government nor the SPLM/A In Opposition is committed to the peace process

themselves to the establishment of a transitional unity government, among others, and reaffirmed the deal at a meeting on 10 June, yet they remain far away from ending the violence and achieving a negotiated settlement. As they failed to honour previous commitments, they also failed to meet the 60-day deadline for the formation of the transitional government.

Neither the South Sudanese government nor the SPLM/A-IO is committed to the peace process. While the government delegation declined to travel to Addis Ababa for the talks at the end of July – on the pretext of bank closures during the Eid celebrations – thereby forcing the postponement of the resumption of the talks, the SPLM/A-IO continued

to express its reservations over the participation of civil society representatives, political parties and former detainees. In an interview with Voice of America on 17 August, rebel leader Riek Machar argued that 'direct talks between us and the government will yield quicker results and will ensure the peace agreement arrives faster than having others on the roundtable'. On 19 August, the mediation process once again stumbled when the government delegation failed to attend the talks, demanding that the matrix of the cessation of hostilities agreement be signed first and that the rules of procedure for the talks be amended only by the two warring parties to allow direct negotiations.

War of words

The apparent determination of both the government and the rebels to see the other short-changed in terms of representation in the transitional unity government, along with their objection to participation of other stakeholders in the process, present major challenges to the latest round of negotiations. In mid-July, President Salva Kiir accused the SPLM/A-IO leader of high-level corruption and of fanning ethnic tensions in the country. In the interview he gave on 17 August, Machar responded by saying that 'President Kiir has lost all credibility to lead a transitional government of national unity', accusing him of 'being liable for the killing of civilians at the genesis of the country's crisis'.

There is a real possibility that this round of talks would also collapse.

The two parties' lack of confidence in the mediation team is another challenge facing the peace process. In the Voice of America interview, Machar blamed the talks' lack of progress and the failure to meet the 10 August deadline on the mediators.

Ugandan presence

The regional dimension of the conflict constitutes a further challenge to the mediation process, as it is an excuse for the parties to frustrate the peace talks. The continued presence of Ugandan troops deployed in support of the government remains a major stumbling block.

While a solution to the political instability and security crisis still seems far away, the UN is warning of an imminent famine in South Sudan. Millions of people in the country have been displaced and agricultural production is now almost at a standstill. The World Food Programme has warned that the famine could arrive as early as December. It says 1.5 million people have been displaced and around 4 million face alarming food insecurity as a result of the eight months of fighting. The

The humanitarian situation has reached an alarming stage with the UN warning of a serious famine affecting millions in the country

attack on humanitarian workers and impediments by both the government and rebels to humanitarian access are further compounding the dire humanitarian situation.

Regional actors frustrated

Although IGAD remains committed to the peace process, there has been growing frustration on the part of an increasing number of member states at the lack of progress and political leadership among the South Sudanese parties. In an attempt to put pressure on the parties, the mediation team has been issuing statements blaming the government for the delay in the resumption of the latest round of talks and the SPLM/A-IO for failing to show up for the talks on 5 August. Following

the eruption of fighting in Bentiu, IGAD mediators, in a statement issued on 15 August, expressed their strong condemnation of the continued flagrant violations of the CHA. There is also serious discussion on the imposition of sanctions and other measures. Although it was postponed at the request of mediators, there was a plan to hold an IGAD Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa on 17 August 2014 to decide on the specific measures to be taken against South Sudan's rival factions.

Within the AU framework, the AU Commission of Inquiry completed its third fact-finding mission to South Sudan on 14 August 2014. During this phase, the Commission undertook visits to all 10 states of South Sudan. In a related development, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)

undertook an advocacy mission on the situation of children in South Sudan from 3–9 August 2014.

UN considers sanctions

In a presidential statement issued on 8 August 2014 expressing grave alarm at and concern over the political, security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan, the UN Security Council (UNSC) condemned the repeated violations of the ceasefire, and the violations of humanitarian law and human rights, emphasising the need for accountability. The statement also expressed the preparedness of the UNSC to consider all appropriate measures, including sanctions, against spoilers of the peace process.

On 12 August, members of the UNSC visited South Sudan. In their assessment of the conflict, the possibility of a meaningful deal in the near future looked bleak. They expressed concern over the prevailing situation in South Sudan and the slow pace of the peace process,

The EU said it was determined to do everything possible to avert the further suffering of the people of South Sudan

and stressed that the UNSC would impose sanctions against anyone who undermined the ongoing peace talks.

US expresses outrage

Members of the Troika on South Sudan, including Norway, the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), issued statements urging IGAD to take action against the warring parties in South Sudan. The European Union (EU) announced that it would impose targeted sanctions against individuals obstructing the South Sudanese peace process. The EU said that it was determined to do 'everything possible to avert the further suffering of the people of South Sudan'.

In a strongly worded statement dated 13 August 2014, US Secretary of State John Kerry said that it was an outrage and an insult to the people of South Sudan that the leaders of the parties to the conflict were letting their citizens down again and again. He also condemned the failure to meet the deadline for a peaceful settlement. Kerry said that it was unacceptable that innocent people were dying while deadlines kept passing and accused the parties of not engaging seriously in the peace talks. The US announced \$180 million of emergency food aid to South Sudan.

Major issues for the PSC

A priority for the PSC is to ensure that the parties honour their commitments under the CHA, that they stop further fighting, and that a mechanism for enforcing these commitments is put in place.

Another serious concern is to find ways of bolstering the IGAD mediation process and ensuring that the parties in the on-going round of talks reach an agreement establishing the proposed transitional government.

A further issue is deploying an effective response to the humanitarian emergency in South Sudan. This includes mobilising member states of the AU and facilitating the implementation of the parties' commitments on humanitarian access.

Options for the PSC

The options available to the PSC include:

- Condemning the continued violation of the CHA, including the recent fighting in Bentiu, and warning the parties that further violations will have serious consequences
- Calling on member states and the international community to mobilise the required humanitarian support to avert the threat of famine facing South Sudanese and demanding the government and the rebels to provide unhindered humanitarian access in accordance with the agreement they signed on 9 May 2014

- Requesting the AUC to prepare the measures necessary to make the parties honour the CHA and engage in the peace process with firm commitment and resolve
- Urging the AUC chairperson to pursue, in coordination with IGAD, the launching of high-level shuttle diplomacy to intensify diplomatic pressure on the parties and add momentum to the IGAD mediation process.

Important documentation

AU documents:

- AU Commission press release, 19 May: 'The African Union appeals to all parties to desist from any action that could undermine national dialogue.'
- PSC, Communiqué, PSC/PR/COMM (CDXL), 12 June 2014
- Communiqué of the 27th Extraordinary Session of IGAD Heads of State, 25 August 2014

UN documents:

- UN Resolution, SC/2155 (2014), 27 May 2014
- Report of UN Secretary General on South Sudan, 25 July 2014

Other documents:

- World Food Programme South Sudan Situation Report #34 4 July 2014

Notable dates for September 2014

2 September

- PSC summit on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa

9 September

- Discussion on developments in the situation in Libya
- Situation in CAR and transition from MISCA to MINUSCA
- Briefing on Ebola outbreak

16 September

- Discussion on the situation in Mali and the Sahel
- Session on the conclusions of the PSC summit in Nairobi

17 September

- Update on talks in South Sudan
- Situation in Darfur, Sudan
- Preparations for field visit to South Sudan



About the ISS

The Institute for Security Studies is an African organisation which aims to enhance human security on the continent. It does independent and authoritative research, provides expert policy analysis and advice, and delivers practical training and technical assistance.

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