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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) intervened in the situation in **Burkina Faso** following the ousting of former president Blaise Compaoré. It gave the military regime two weeks to hand over power to a civilian transitional government.

The PSC last month also discussed **elections** in Africa where a number of African Union (AU) observer missions had been deployed. These included elections in Mozambique and Tunisia.

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The PSC is concerned about the structural causes of **state fragility**. It noted that conflict prevention has to focus not only on triggers of conflict but also on the structural conditions that propel countries into conflict.

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Ebola not only threatens the health of citizens in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, but also poses a threat to the socio-political stability of these countries.

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Popular ousting of Compaoré not considered contrary to AU norms

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) has accepted that the popular protest that ousted President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso is not a classic case of an unconstitutional change of government but rather an expression of ‘people’s right to overthrow oppressive regimes’. The military takeover and suspension of the constitution, however, is considered a coup d’état and the African Union (AU) has given the military until 18 November to hand over power to a civilian regime. With ECOWAS calling for restraint over sanctions against Burkina Faso, it risks being on a collision course with the AU should the latter impose sanctions at the end of its two-week deadline.

At its first meeting on the crisis in Burkina Faso on 3 November 2014, the AU PSC reviewed the Burkina Faso military’s installing one of its own as the country’s leader following the ‘resignation’ of long-time President Blaise Compaoré on 31 October 2014. Apart from the AU’s concerns over the potential for further instability in the country, the main focus of the PSC’s session was the issue of whether there had been an unconstitutional seizure of power as defined by the AU’s norms on unconstitutional changes of government.

Meanwhile, questions are also being asked about the AU’s role in the run-up to the events of 30 and 31 October 2014 – particularly whether its early-warning system alerted policy makers before the situation reached a crisis level and whether AU policy makers made any effort to respond proactively and contain the situation.

At the 3 November meeting, the PSC did not consider the protests that forced Compaoré to leave office to be contrary to AU norms. Building on the practice that started with the adoption of the 50-year anniversary’s solemn declaration and reiterated at the PSC’s 432nd session, the PSC affirmed ‘the right of peoples to rise up peacefully against oppressive political systems’. It thus expressed its acknowledgement of the ‘profound aspiration’ of the people of Burkina Faso to uphold their constitution and deepen democracy in the country.

Current PSC Chair

HE Ambassador Konjit Sinegorgis

Permanent Representative of Ethiopia 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

Compaoré’s departure involved a resignation

In strict legal terms, unlike the case of Egypt, where the president was forced out, Compaoré’s departure involved a resignation. As a procedure anticipated in the national constitution, ‘resignation’, unlike forced removal, does not give rise to questions of unconstitutional changes of government warranting the application of the AU’s norm. The issue of unconstitutionality in Burkina Faso’s particular circumstances arose in the context of the political developments witnessed after Compaoré had relinquished power. The army, instead of allowing the procedure stipulated in the national constitution in the event of the resignation of the president to be followed, suspended the constitution and appointed Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida, the deputy head of the Presidential Guard, as transitional leader.

In a communiqué issued after the meeting, the PSC rejected the army's declaration 'as constituting a coup d'état'. However, it suspended the application of the measures to be taken under the AU's norm on unconstitutional changes of government in the event of a coup for a period of two weeks.

Some members of the PSC held that consistency demanded the immediate application of the procedures envisaged in the AU's norm in the event of a coup, but the overwhelming view expressed in the PSC was that a limited grace period should be allowed for the transfer of power to a civilian authority, as proposed by the AU Commission Chair. Accordingly, the PSC put the Burkinabe military on two weeks' notice for transferring power to a 'consensual and civilian' administration based on 'the respect of the constitution and the aspiration of the people of Burkina Faso' until elections are held. It was believed that this would ease the mediation efforts and facilitate the speedy resolution of the crisis. In this context, the PSC also underlined the continued validity of the constitution.

The PSC rejected the army's declaration 'as constituting a coup d'état'

Soon after the PSC's announcement of the two-week deadline and amid continuing protests against the military's takeover, Zida announced that the military would hand over power to a transitional body made up of civilians.

While this announcement was in line with the PSC's demand, it remained unclear whether the speaker of parliament would take over the interim leadership pursuant to Article 43 of the Burkinabe constitution. In April 2012, following the coup d'état in neighbouring Mali, that speaker of parliament headed a transitional administration with clear timelines for elections. Since the speaker of parliament was one of the actors implicated in Compaoré's failed attempt to change the presidential term limits of the constitution, the ongoing discussions and mediation processes seem to focus on clarifying the composition of the transitional civilian authority, rather than the strict application of the constitution.

Ensuring the integrity of the constitutional process

The PSC's affirmation of the validity of the constitution was significant not only in terms of the concerns over the AU's norm on unconstitutional changes of government for ensuring respect for constitutional rule, but also of the demands of the people to secure the integrity of the constitutional process.

Since the PSC's meeting, the presidents of Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria have travelled to Burkina Faso in an effort to push

for the speedy transfer of power to a civilian administration. Like the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also did not immediately impose sanctions against the military in Burkina Faso.

In terms of follow-up on the PSC's decision, two frameworks have been provided for. First, the AU appointed Edem Kodjo, former secretary general of the AU's predecessor the Organisation of African Unity and one of the new members of the Panel of the Wise, as a special representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission to Burkina Faso. Second, the PSC requested the AU Commission to report to it at the end of the two-week period on 18 November on the efforts made towards a civilian-led and consensual transition.

AU and ECOWAS disagree over sanctions

The PSC also awaits the outcome of the AU/ECOWAS/United Nations (UN) Joint Mission, which returned to Burkina Faso on 3 November 2014. The joint mission, initially composed of AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Aisha Laraba Abdullahi, President of the ECOWAS Commission Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo and Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa and head of the UN Office for West Africa, undertook its first visit to Burkina Faso on 31 October and 1 November. At the political level, the AU, ECOWAS and the UN showed a high level of convergence. They separately issued statements expressing concern over the situation and urging a peaceful resolution to the crisis. It was this convergence that facilitated the swift deployment of the joint mission.

If progress was not made, the PSC expressed its intention 'to take all appropriate measures, including the suspension of Burkina Faso from participating in [the] AU's activities and the imposition of targeted sanctions against all those who would be obstructing the efforts referred to above, in accordance with the relevant AU instruments'.

Although a plan for a return to civilian rule was adopted by political parties, civil society organisations and religious leaders on Sunday 9 November, agreement was not reached over who heads the transition. In the meantime, ECOWAS at an extraordinary meeting held in Ghana's capital Accra appointed Senegal's president Macky Sall as mediator and urged the international community to abstain from sanctioning Burkina Faso. With Zida reportedly rejecting the two-week AU deadline, ECOWAS stands to be on a collision course with the AU should the latter impose sanctions at the end of its two-week deadline.

At the political level, the AU, ECOWAS and the UN showed a high level of convergence



Addis Insight

PSC keeping an eye on African elections

In October the PSC discussed elections taking place in a number of African countries. This quarterly review is aimed at minimising the risk of election-related violence and political crises.

As a follow-up to the African Union's (AU) Panel of the Wise Report entitled 'Election-related disputes and political violence', a landmark contribution to the efforts of the AU to prevent crises associated with elections, the PSC reviewed elections in member states every two months until 12 March 2014, and have continued doing so on quarterly basis since. Established as a means for initiating preventive action in countries facing a risk of violence or political crisis around elections, the latest PSC consideration of its thematic agenda on elections took place on 16 October 2014.

As a consequence of the political crisis in Lesotho, elections in that country have been moved forward from 2017 to February 2015

During the session, the Director of Political Affairs (DPA) briefed the PSC on the processes in the run-up to a number of elections on the continent, as well as the elections that were already underway in Mozambique. The Commissioner for Peace and Security also informed the Council about some critical upcoming elections on which the AU was keeping a close eye.

The elections that were of most immediate interest to the PSC's work on conflict prevention were those in Mozambique and Tunisia. Others that featured in the report that the DPA submitted included the general elections in Botswana (scheduled for 24 October) and the presidential and national assembly elections in Namibia (29 November).

An AU Election Observation Mission to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe's parliamentary and local elections had been deployed on 5 October. The elections took place on 12 October. The observer mission will be on the ground until 19 October, and its preliminary findings will be issued shortly after the elections, followed by comprehensive final report after two months. As a consequence of the political crisis in Lesotho, elections in that country have been moved forward from 2017 to February 2015.

Mozambique elections 'free and fair'

The presidential and legislative elections in Mozambique on 15 October followed a drawn-out period of instability caused by a resurgence of violence by the Mozambican National Resistance (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*, or Renamo) rebel group, which accuses the government of reneging on its promises following the end of the civil war in 1992. After several rounds of negotiations between the government and Renamo, an agreement was signed that permitted Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama to stand as candidate in the elections. Outgoing President Armando Guebuza was praised for not using the rebellion as a pretext to prolong his presidency.



THE ELECTIONS THAT WERE OF MOST IMMEDIATE INTEREST TO THE PSC'S WORK ON CONFLICT PREVENTION WERE THOSE IN MOZAMBIQUE AND TUNISIA

The ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, or Frelimo) achieved a decisive win, with its presidential candidate Filipe Nyusi receiving over 57% of the vote. Renamo contested the outcome, saying that there were serious irregularities and the results are not credible. Renamo's candidate Dhlakama got 37% of the votes. Observers, however, generally gave the polls a clean bill of health. According to a statement by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) observer mission to the elections in Mozambique, released on 17 October, the polls were deemed 'generally peaceful, transparent, free and fair, and credible'. An AU Election Observation Mission has been on the ground with 10 long-term and 35 short-term observers, and it reportedly also endorsed the elections as 'largely peaceful and free from intimidation'.

Preliminary results show a decisive win for the ruling Frelimo

Botswana's Ian Khama stays on

Presidential and legislative elections took place in Botswana on 24 October. President Ian Khama, who successfully staved off a split in the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) in 2010, was the favourite to win. The BDP, which has ruled Botswana since independence, clinched 37 out of 57 seats in parliament. Khama remains head of state in line with the proportional electoral system.

Human rights activists say individual freedoms are being curtailed and the media is increasingly restricted by Khama's regime. The Mo Ibrahim Index, however, still puts the country among Africa's top five performers when it comes to a range of good governance indicators such as respect for the rule of law and inclusive government.

The AU's election observation mission to Botswana was headed by former Malawian President Joyce Banda and comprises 35 observers drawn from the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), African ambassadors to the AU, election management bodies, human right institutions and civil society organisations from various African countries.

Human rights activists say individual freedoms are being curtailed and the media is increasingly restricted by Khama's regime

Questions over electoral reform in Namibia

Namibians are going to the polls for legislative and presidential elections on 28 November this year. President Hifikepunye Pohamba is stepping down after two terms and the ruling SWAPO Party of Namibia (SWAPO) will field vice-president Hage Geingob as candidate. SWAPO has increased its support in every election since independence in 1989. The party got 76,4% of the vote in the last election in 2009 and occupies 54 out of the 72 seats in Parliament.

Opposition parties and civil society in Namibia are concerned about planned changes to the electoral law on the eve of the elections that could further the dominance of the ruling party and strengthen the powers of the president. A redrafting of the electoral law by the country's Law Reform and Development Commission has been ongoing since 2011, but the opposition decries SWAPO's influence in both the Commission and the Electoral Commission of Namibia.

Recent elections

12 October

- São Tomé and Príncipe

15 October

- Mozambique

24 October

- Botswana

26 October

- Tunisia (legislative)

Upcoming elections

23 November

- Tunisia (presidential)

29 November

- Namibia

February 2015

- Lesotho

14 February 2015

- Nigeria

First presidential poll in Tunisia after the revolution

Tunisia's presidential elections are scheduled for 23 November, with a second round planned for 28 December if no candidate gets an outright majority. This follows legislative polls on 26 October.

The elections are seen as a test for Tunisia's democratic transition following the Arab Spring

Coming against the background of low-level political instability and in the context of rising concerns about terrorism and regional instability, the presidential elections are seen as a test for Tunisia's democratic transition following the Arab Spring in 2011 that saw the ouster of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Observers predict that Baji Caïd Essebsi, the leader of the Nida Tounes party, which won the legislative elections, stands a good chance to win the presidential poll.

The AU announced the deployment of its observer mission on 15 October. Headed by Cassam Uteem, former president of Mauritius, the 40-member short-term observer mission will survey the planned elections across the country.

The political instability that rocked Lesotho was followed by a successful mediation process by SADC

SADC deal sees Lesotho hold early elections

The political instability that rocked Lesotho at the end of August, with allegations of an attempted coup by elements of the military, was followed by a successful mediation process by SADC. South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, the SADC mediator, managed to convince the political parties in Lesotho to end the stalemate in the country caused by the suspension of Parliament in June 2014.

Parliament reopened on 17 October to plan for early elections, to be held in February 2015, according to the terms of the SADC-mediated deal. It now remains to be seen which of Lesotho's numerous political parties will come out on top. Prime Minister Tom Thabane of the All Basotho Convention has been in power thanks to a coalition with the Lesotho Congress for Democracy and the Basotho National Party. This is despite the fact that the Democratic Congress of former prime minister Pakalitha Mosisili holds the largest of seats in Parliament relative to other individual parties.

On the Agenda

A focus on state fragility as a key concern of the AU's conflict prevention work



Instead of only focusing on conflict management and conflict resolution, it is also important for the AU to consider the structural causes of conflict. These include emerging demographical and environmental issues affecting fragile states.

On 27 October 2014, the PSC held an open session on the theme 'Structural prevention of conflicts: reinvigorating states in fragile situations'. This theme takes cognisance of the recent relapse of countries in transition back to conflict and acknowledges the vulnerability of various African Union (AU) member states to conflict and political upheaval. Notably, it emphasises that conflict prevention has to focus not only on triggers of conflict but also on the structural conditions that propel countries into conflict. In this context, while the 16 October 2014 PSC session dealt with triggers of conflict with a particular focus on elections, the 27 October session focused on 'states in fragile situations', drawing attention to structural causes of conflicts.

Given the heavy reliance on conflict resolution and conflict management tools characteristic of the AU's practice to date, the importance of dedicating more time and resources to themes such as these cannot be overstated. If the experience of countries such as South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali is anything to go by, it is clear that the AU cannot make meaningful headway to prevent new conflicts from erupting, or prevent countries coming out of conflict from relapsing back into violent instability, without paying greater attention to the situation of state fragility in Africa.

In January 2013 the High Level Panel on Fragile States, chaired by Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the President of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, launched a report entitled 'Ending conflict and building peace in Africa: a call to action'. The report indicated that fragility is a result of both structural flaws, attributable to the nature of the formation of African states, and more recent emerging demographic and environmental developments such as rapid urbanisation, the youth bulge and climate change.

Breaking out of the trap of fragility

As was pointed out in a recent Institute for Security Studies (ISS) study, a fragile state is one in which armed conflict and violence threaten the lives of citizens and prevent them from making a decent living. It is a state where inequality and exclusion are rife, with the majority of the population remaining poor despite its having rich natural resources in many cases. It is also a country with very poor governance, where the state is often simply absent and does not provide basic services such as schools, hospitals and decent roads.

The High Level Panel Report held that fragility is not a problem faced by a certain category of states, but a condition affecting all countries in Africa. The degree of fragility, however, varies from country to country. The 2013 ISS study, by Jakkie Cilliers

THE PSC SESSION OF

16 OCTOBER
2014

DEALT WITH TRIGGERS OF
CONFLICT WITH A PARTICULAR
FOCUS ON ELECTIONS

and Timothy D Sisk, furthermore points out that a large number of African countries show significant levels of fragility and hence face a real risk of conflict and instability. In the past two years, a number of countries emerging from conflict have plunged back into violence. These include Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the CAR and most recently South Sudan.

The curse of state fragility, bequeathed by colonialism and sustained through bad governance and poor leadership, need not be a permanent feature of countries in Africa. Indeed, one of the lessons from the 2014 Fragile States Index, drawn up by the Washington-based Fund For Peace and released last June, was that countries could progressively move from a status of being most fragile to stronger levels of state capacity, increasingly breaking out of the trap of fragility. As highlighted by the index, while Sierra Leone has become the first country to exit the 'alert' category, the progress Liberia has made in the past decade means that it may well follow Sierra Leone out of the 'alert' category in the coming years. Both countries, however, now face unfortunate reversals due to the Ebola epidemic.

The curse of state fragility, bequeathed by colonialism and sustained through bad governance and poor leadership, need not be a permanent feature of countries in Africa

Leadership key to emerge from fragility

Here again, the ISS study offers insights into the nature of the interventions that help countries overcome the challenges posed by fragility. It convincingly demonstrates that moving from a status of more fragile to a more resilient position is predicated on both short-term and long-term responses. It thus argues for investment in conflict prevention and management as well as long-term and sustained investment in all spheres, including politics, security, institution-building and socio-economic recovery.

As rightly underscored in the ISS study, given the historical context from which today's state systems in Africa emerged, there is no doubt that the fragility of African states cannot be understood in isolation from the nature and delayed process of state formation. Equally, the process of moving from greater fragility to greater resilience is deeply political. Success depends not only on the political and development support given to fragile countries, but also on the leadership of and ownership by national and local actors. These two aspects are particularly key when defining the problems facing a country and the articulation

of the required policy and development responses, as well as the prioritisation of such responses.

Regular review of fragile states needed

The work of the PSC on fragility can be strengthened by a number of measures. One such measure is the operationalisation of the provision in the conclusions of the Maseru PSC Retreat in which the PSC decided 'to dedicate at least a session on a quarterly basis to undertake a thorough assessment of the trends and dynamics of peace, security and stability in Africa, in which relevant Civil Society Organisations, in collaboration with the relevant departments of the AU Commission, submit findings of their research on potential risks of conflict, instability and violence.' In this context, it will also be of particular importance for the PSC to adopt 'Structural prevention of conflicts: reinvigorating states in fragile situations' as one of its regular standing thematic agenda items.

Additionally and as pointed out earlier, the PSC is also best placed, as part of its conflict prevention role, to initiate a review of states in higher levels of fragility and formulate a framework on the basis of which the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations (UN) and other development actors could pursue various policy interventions to help those states progressively overcome their fragility. To take such a process forward, it is important that the PSC request the AU to set up a high-level multi-department task force that will undertake these tasks, building on various existing works, including the report of the High Level Panel on Fragile States.

As part of its periodic focus on this theme, the PSC should review the conditions of AU member states, notably those facing a high risk of violence, based on reports of the Chairperson of the Commission about these member states. Such a periodic review can also be used as an opportunity to mobilise support and establish a network of relevant regional and international institutions, including RECs, the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the European Union and the World Bank. Their expertise and concerted efforts are critical in systematically and aggressively pursuing this agenda.

If the AU and countries in Africa are to make headway in overcoming the trap of fragility, there is a need to continuously monitor and robustly engage with countries that have a higher risk of falling back into violence and conflict. To this end, programmes and plans need to be put in place and resources and political will mobilised along the lines outlined above. Such an approach offers not only the best prospect for the PSC to engage meaningfully in the structural prevention of conflicts, but also the leadership that is required to address the risks facing states in fragile situations.

Situation Analysis

Ebola threatens social and political stability in affected countries



While its deployment of a support mission to Ebola-struck countries continues, the AU should take note of the socio-political implications of the epidemic.

According to figures released on 29 October 2014 by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Ebola outbreak has claimed 4 920 lives out of 13 703 cases recorded in mostly Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Although these figures are likely to be underestimated, health experts say they indicate that the epidemic is out of control and developing exponentially, with the WHO forecasting between 5 000 and 10 000 new infections per week as from December. If nothing is done and the current rate of infection continues, this is likely to increase the threat to the security and stability of the countries affected, and even beyond.

The scale of the outbreak prompted the PSC to convene a meeting on 29 October. This followed an earlier meeting on 19 August. During this meeting, its 450th, the PSC acknowledged 'the seriousness of the security implications' of the current outbreak and expressed concern about its potential to undermine progress made by these three post-conflict countries.

The PSC acknowledged the seriousness of the security implications of the current outbreak

In order to tackle the crisis, the PSC authorised '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'. The deployment of the AU support mission to the West African countries affected by the Ebola epidemic (ASEOWA) began in September in Liberia with the arrival of the first volunteers.

On 22 October the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma started a tour of the area, pledging more support from the AU to fight the epidemic. She called upon member states to scale up their contributions and send more health personnel. 'After deploying AU volunteers, we have written to the heads of state, asking them to volunteer more human resources. Some of them have started responding, while we are still waiting for others to respond,' she said in a statement on 23 October after meeting with Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma.

Threat of political and social upheaval

Ebola clearly poses a threat to the security and stability of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea – countries still struggling to deal with the consequences of prolonged civil wars (Liberia and Sierra Leone) and chronic political instability (Guinea). The current crisis is likely to have a significant effect not only on these countries' economies but also on their public order, peace and social cohesion, political life, and the effective

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functioning of their institutions. The spread of the epidemic thus increases the risks of political and social instability.

Planned elections heighten tensions

Politically, Guinea and Liberia are faced with a particular challenge because of important elections coming up: local elections in Guinea and senatorial elections in Liberia. In Guinea, there are concerns that the delays in the organisation of local elections, which should have taken place in the first quarter of 2014, will increase existing tensions between the government and the opposition. One would have expected political parties to set aside their differences while the country is faced with the threat of Ebola, but this does not seem to be the case. The same risk of increased political tensions over delays in the elections in Liberia should also not be underestimated. These were scheduled for October, but were postponed to December, with uncertainty about whether they will take place at all.

Social stability in the affected countries is also at risk. Several incidents characteristic of the way the outbreak has been managed have highlighted the persistent tensions and mistrust between the local populations and public authorities. There is a risk that these tensions could escalate and lead to social unrest.

There is a risk that these tensions could escalate and lead to social unrest

In illustration, on October 2014, clashes between youths and police officers in the town of Koidu in eastern Sierra Leone escalated into riots and gunfire, leading to the imposition of a curfew. The clashes have reportedly been caused by the refusal of a former youth leader to allow medical personnel to check his grandmother's Ebola status.

In Guinea, a team campaigning to raise awareness about the Ebola virus in the region of N'zérékoré, the second largest city (South-East), was assaulted in September by villagers who accused the team members of spreading false information about the virus's mode of transmission. This resulted in the death of eight team members. Riots also erupted in N'zérékoré on 28 and 29 August after several people attacked hospital facilities and medical personnel in the city following rumours over disinfection operations that were reportedly carried out in the local market. The police intervened, firing tear gas, and a curfew was also imposed.

In the same vein, on 20 August violent clashes broke out in the West Point area of the Liberian capital Monrovia between inhabitants and security forces tasked with enforcing the quarantine that had been ordered a few days before, resulting in the death of a teenager.

With the epidemic out of control, there is concern that such incidents could increase, highlighting the need for authorities in the concerned countries and all those involved in the response to the epidemic to improve transparency and communicate effectively about efforts to raise public awareness about the nature of the epidemic, modes of transmission and the measures taken to address it.

Villagers accused the team members of spreading false information about the virus's mode of transmission

Increasingly robust regional response

African countries' initial response to the Ebola outbreak was driven by panic, leading to drastic measures aimed at isolating Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in a bid to prevent the virus from spreading. The most emblematic measures consisted of closing borders and suspending flights from these countries, which greatly contributed to their stigmatisation as well as that of their citizens.

On 1 August, the heads of member states of the Mano River Union (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) held an Extraordinary Summit in Conakry, Guinea to discuss the response to the Ebola outbreak. They committed themselves to taking steps to stop the spread of the epidemic, especially in border areas. This included providing the people living in these areas with material assistance.

Following the 31st meeting of its Mediation and Security Committee held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, in March, the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) described the outbreak as a 'serious threat to regional security' and called for a regional response. At the organisation's 45th Summit of Heads of State and Government held in July in Accra, Ghana, it was decided to establish a Regional Solidarity Fund against Ebola. Gathered for a special session in Accra on 28 August, the health ministers of ECOWAS called for the deployment of health workers to the countries affected and the provision of materials and equipment. It is probably in line with this call that the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) is expected to deploy 300 health workers to the three Ebola-affected countries.

African countries have shown solidarity to varying degrees. Nigeria has already pledged US\$3,5 million and to deploy about 506 volunteers. The Gambia has provided US\$1 million, half of it to Sierra Leone and half to Guinea. Côte d'Ivoire similarly pledged US\$1 million to the three affected countries and promised to send doctors. On 24 October, Ethiopia announced it would send 200 volunteer health personnel and

donate US\$500 000 to the affected countries. South Africa has pledged US\$4 million, which includes US\$1 million from the local business community. Teams of experts have also been sent from South Africa to the affected countries and plans are in place to build a crematorium in West Africa, South Africa's Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said last month.

On 17 October, the East African Community also announced that more than 600 health professionals, including 41 medical doctors, would be sent to the affected countries. According to Dlamini-Zuma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also ready to send up to 1 000 volunteers to the region. A meeting with business people is planned for 8 November to raise funds for the effort, Dlamini-Zuma said in a statement on 24 October.

Finally, it is important to note that the African Development Bank (AfDB) was one of the first institutions to take action. Since April 2014, nearly US\$213 million have been allocated to assist the countries affected or likely to be affected (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal) in an effort to mitigate the impact of the epidemic, enhance technical skills and enable these countries to acquire the necessary equipment.

The African Development Bank was one of the first institutions to take action

International response still inadequate

There is wide acknowledgment that the international community's response to the Ebola outbreak has so far been slow and inadequate. Although it is evident that the countries affected lack the necessary capabilities, the international community is not doing enough to curb the exponential rise of the epidemic. In fact, most financial pledges, as well as commitments to send health personnel, have yet to materialise.

The WHO's response, including that of its surveillance system, has been the main target of criticism in terms of the slow international response. It is accused, including by several health professionals, of having been too slow in measuring the full scale and gravity of the epidemic. While the first case of Ebola was recorded in Guinea in December 2013, the WHO was reportedly only informed on 23 March 2014. It was only on August 8, despite several warnings by humanitarian organisations on the ground, that the organisation declared the outbreak a 'public health emergency of global reach'.

Although the international response remains disappointing, given what is needed, mobilisation has increased in recent months. This mobilisation coincided with the realisation that there is a real risk of Ebola spreading to other parts of the

world. It has resulted in several high-level meetings, notably by the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the World Bank.

Most financial pledges, as well as commitments to send health personnel, have yet to materialise

UN Security Council Resolution 2177, adopted on 18 September, also marked a significant step in the international response to the Ebola outbreak, which it described as a 'threat to international peace and security'. The resolution called for a mobilisation of the international community and for UN member states not to isolate the affected countries. During the meeting of the UN Security Council at which the resolution was adopted, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced the launch of the UN Mission for Emergency Action against Ebola (MINUACE) tasked with collaborating with all relevant stakeholders in order to stop the epidemic, treat infected persons and prevent the disease from spreading to other countries.

International mobilisation was also illustrated by financial, material, and human resources contributions and pledges by several countries and private stakeholders (African and international charities, foundations and personalities).

As an illustration, in April, China provided funding and equipment (protective clothing, disinfectants, medicines, thermometers) amounting to almost \$5 million. China also sent health personnel to affected countries in May this year. On 16 October the Chinese Premier pledged an additional grant of \$15,7 million, which should consist of ambulances, motorcycles and medical kits.

Cuba sent 165 doctors and health workers in Sierra Leone and 83 to Guinea and Liberia in the course of October.

The contribution of the United States in the fight against the epidemic in West Africa amounted to over \$300 million. More than 170 health workers and 600 military personnel are currently in the region, mainly in Liberia. An additional 4 000 troops could be mobilised depending on the needs. Troops deployed to Liberia are contributing to the construction of treatment centres with a capacity of over 17 000 beds, providing logistical support and operating three mobile testing laboratories.

The EU and its member states committed to contribute to up to €800 million, for the provision of medical care, for efforts to contain the epidemic and to assist affected countries to deal with its consequences of Ebola, particularly the economic impact. On 24 October, EU leaders decided to bring their financial contribution to €1 billion.

European assistance also involves contributions and actions by a number of individual countries. Germany announced on October 17 a contribution of €100 million, through the WHO and humanitarian organisations on the ground.

France is mainly engaged in Guinea, through the establishment of a treatment center, creation of a laboratory, deployment of experts and provision of medical equipments and food aid. It has also provided financial assistance, as well as experts to international organisations like the WHO, AfDB and World Bank.

The United Kingdom (UK), which is particularly active in Sierra Leone, has pledged \$201 million (125 million pounds) to the affected countries. The UK deployed military personnel to the country, involved in building Ebola treatment centers, as well as epidemiologists. On October 17, a medical military vessel carrying military equipments left to Sierra Leone.

The World Bank planned to raise \$400 million to assist the three affected countries

The international financial institutions are also responding to the Ebola outbreak. In this regard, the World Bank planned to raise \$400 million to assist the three affected countries. This assistance should help acquire vehicles, medicines, protective equipment, train health workers, and provide financial compensations and incentives for volunteers and health workers.

To fill the fiscal gap generated by the epidemic, estimated by the World Bank at \$93 million in Liberia, \$79 million in Sierra Leone and \$120 million in Guinea, the International Monetary Fund on 26 September also approved the allocation of \$130 million to the three countries.

A multi-faceted approach needed

The continued spread of Ebola in the three affected countries, the risks of expansion to other countries and the relatively low impact of regional and international efforts, highlight the fact that much more needs to be done to address the situation.

The current outbreak clearly has a huge impact on the affected countries' economies, the wellbeing of their populations, social interactions, relationships between authorities and citizens, and their political and institutional life. A multifaceted approach is therefore needed to fight the impact of Ebola comprehensively.

AU response could be speeded up

Given the consequences of Ebola, not only socially and economically but also politically and in terms of security, the PSC could assess the risks of social and political instability, including by deploying a mission to the field.

Given the urgency of the situation on the ground, it is important that the AU's ASEOWA is effective and benefits from all necessary means. For this purpose, the PSC could call for an accelerated deployment of the mission and urge all member states to provide it with the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate.

The material and human resources that can contribute to stop the spread of Ebola are still far from being effectively mobilised, nor are they sufficient. The PSC could therefore renew its call to member states to assist the affected countries, including by providing experienced health workers.

Important documents

AU documents

- Communiqué of the 450th meeting of the PSC, PSC/PR/COMM. (CDL), 19 August 2014, <http://au.int/en/sites/default/files/cps%20com%20450%20epidemie%20d'ebola%2019-8-2014.pdf>

UN Documents

- UN Security Council Resolution 2177 (2014), 18 September 2014, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2177%20\(2014\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2177%20(2014))

Other documents

- Joint Declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union for the eradication of Ebola in West Africa, Conakry, 1 August 2014, <http://www.wahooas.org/spip.php?article718>
- European Union Council Conclusions on Ebola, 20 October 2014, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/145195.pdf
- France Ebola response, http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/Ebola_def_FR_cle0d6b71.pdf
- Sweden, Ministry of foreign affairs, 23 October 2014, <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/24/88/75/95d80634.pdf>

PSC Interview

The PSC is what member states want it to be, says Burundi ambassador



Interview with HE Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi to Ethiopia, Djibouti, Chad and South Sudan, Permanent Representative to the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

How do you assess the effectiveness of the PSC?

The PSC is what the member states want it to be. At times member states do not give the council enough importance. The Libyan crisis of 2011, for example, wouldn't have ended the way it did if member states of the African Union [AU] and the international community had listened to the PSC.

The Ebola epidemic is shaming Africa. Africa is yet to be seen to take action

Member states also tend to make a lot of promises, but are slow in taking action. The council has repeatedly called for support in Somalia, for example. How many African countries contribute to the Peace Fund? The Ebola epidemic is shaming Africa. Africa is yet to be seen to take action. Where are we? We have made a decision to deploy a humanitarian mission. How many countries responded to the call?

In fact, the decisions of the PSC on unconstitutional changes of government are the ones that earned it the most respect. This principle, however, needs to be rethought and redefined, as most of the PSC decisions in this regard have been focused on coups d'état, while the concept is much broader. The recent controversy surrounding Egypt [where the AU decided to lift the suspension of Egypt], divided the opinions of member states.

What were the major challenges you faced as chair of the PSC for the month of August 2014?

The chair of the PSC has to deal with a number of institutions and actors while designing the programme of the month. We sometimes deal with issues of a member country and that country may oppose its inclusion on the agenda. This happened to me as a chair, but after discussions we were able to convince the country at the end.

The other challenge has to do with relations with the regional mechanisms. South Sudan, for example, was considered by the Council in August and the PSC planned a field mission to South Sudan. However, the visit was cancelled after some member states expressed their reservations. Even if we conducted that field trip we might have gone there with a divided council. The trip might still take place in a few months' time.

It is important to note that the chair of the Council is just a facilitator. You have to listen to member states, the regional mechanisms and other stakeholders to make sure that your plans are accepted by all parties. My feeling is that if we continue with this trend [of constraining the autonomy of the PSC in setting its agenda] we might disarm the Council and deprive it of its strength as an Africa-wide body. If we don't give it the prominence it deserves, conflict would get out of hand on the continent.

We sometimes deal with issues of a member country and that country may oppose its inclusion on the agenda

Which issues grabbed the attention of the Council in the month of August? And what are your successes as a chair of the PSC?

In August for the first time the PSC addressed the issue of Libya and came up with a strong statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and subsequent political process to resolve the crisis in the country. Given the situation, one has to come up with a solution that will bring all the parties to the table. The fact that we came up with that statement was one of the successes of the PSC.

The other highlight of the Council was the decision to deploy a humanitarian mission, which was the first of its kind, to the Ebola-affected countries of the continent. Though medical in nature, the mission included military and civilian elements. We considered Ebola not just a public health issue, but also a security threat. It was the first time the Council labelled a disease a security threat.

We also touched upon the issue of South Sudan and we announced that if the parties do not comply with the agreements they have signed, they will be held accountable and sanctioned accordingly. We came up with the strong statement before IGAD [the Intergovernmental Authority on Development] made a similar statement.

We also dealt with all the hotspots, including the Central African Republic [CAR] in light of the transition from the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR, and the Brazzaville Conference (from 21–23 July 2014). The AU strategy on Mali and Sahel was also considered in the same month.

How do you see the relations between the PSC and the Regional Economic Communities [RECs]?

It is a very important question. It is true that RECs are closer and have more dynamic interaction with countries. That can help resolve a conflict. But I see the role of RECs more in the prevention than the resolution of conflicts. It is sad that at times the RECs don't see that the PSC has the primary responsibility for dealing with issues of peace and security on the continent.

At some point Africa has to show leadership. The only organ on the continent that can show leadership in matters of peace and security is the PSC of the AU.

What must be done to improve the effectiveness of the PSC?

The first issue is ownership of our conflicts. The PSC is the number one body responsible for peace and security in Africa. We have to remember that we don't operate alone. African conflicts may have implications beyond the continent and non-African actors also have a stake in what happens. For the PSC to be effective it has to be very clear that it is the first and foremost organ to deal with African conflicts. I know that involves resources that we don't have at the moment, but to be effective it has to work on the issue of ownership. That should involve all members of the AU. We should do that if we want partners to take us seriously.

We should also make sure that there is harmony and excellent working relations between the PSC, AUC [AU Commission], RECs and the African Peace and Security Architecture. The African Standby Force and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis should work with the PSC. It is important that the organs established and mandated by the PSC should work closely with the Council. The Peace Fund should also be taken as a serious responsibility.

How do you see the role of the civil society organisations and think tanks like the ISS in supporting the work of the PSC?

They are the eyes and ears of the council and the AU in general. They are in the field. The civil society perspective is very different from that of other stakeholders. The state has its own interests. So do parties to a conflict. Civil society by definition ideally looks at situations objectively. They help the PSC reach a decision objectively. Civil society also has a role in conflict prevention.

The PSC programme of work for November

03 November

- PSC meeting on the situation in Burkina Faso

05 November

- Consideration and adoption of the monthly programme of work

11 November

- Briefing on the situation in Libya

13 November

- Review of the AUPSC/EUPSC joint mission to Mali

18 November

- Review of the situation in Burkina Faso

24 November

- Preparations for field visit to South Sudan

25 November

- Briefing on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan

26 November

- Situation in the Central African Republic

28 November

- Open session on Ebola and the AU Support Mission to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA)



About the ISS

The Institute for Security Studies is an African organisation that 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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Acknowledgements



The publication of the PSC Report is made possible through the support of the Humanity United Foundation and the Hanns Seidel Stiftung. The ISS is also grateful for the support of the following members of the ISS Partnership Forum: the governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the USA.

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