

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 9 October 2023 from the Chair of the Ad Hoc
Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention
and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the
Security Council**

I have the honour to draw your attention to the seventeenth annual joint consultative meeting between members of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, held in Addis Ababa on 6 October 2023.

During the consultative meeting, the members of the two Councils agreed upon a joint communiqué (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pedro Comissário **Afonso**

Chair

Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on
Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa



Annex to the letter dated 9 October 2023 from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

Joint communiqué

Seventeenth annual joint consultative meeting between members of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council, Addis Ababa, 6 October 2023

[Original: English and French]

1. The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held their seventeenth (17th) Annual Joint Consultative Meeting at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 6 October 2023. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC, within the context of the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed on 19 April 2017, convened to deliberate on peace and security issues.
2. The AUPSC and the Members of the UNSC *underlined* that Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations accords the UNSC with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Furthermore, they *reaffirmed* the mandate of the AUPSC concerning the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, as per the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.
3. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC *recalled* the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations on the role of regional arrangements in matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security, and the UNSC's authority to utilize such regional arrangements, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN.
4. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC *reaffirmed* their support for the leadership of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the UN Secretary-General for their efforts, which culminated in the signing of the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security on 19 April 2017, which continues to serve as a strong pillar for international cooperation, and a catalyst for both Organizations' ongoing efforts to address complex and evolving peace and security challenges in Africa.
5. On 5 October 2023, the AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC *held* the 8th Joint Informal Seminar to exchange views on financing AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and further deliberated on issues of Youth, Peace and Security, as well as enhancing cooperation between the AU PSC and the UNSC, focusing particularly on relevant working methods. The Joint Informal Meeting was preceded by preparatory consultations of the Peace and Security Council Committee of Experts, and the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, held in Addis Ababa from 3 to 4 October 2023.
6. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC *reaffirmed* the significant contributions of AU led PSOs and UN PKOs in maintaining regional and continental peace and security in a context specific manner, with specific reference to the AU-led PSOs expertise in peace enforcement. They *expressed grave concern* over the evolving security situation with myriad threats to peace, security and stability on the African Continent. They *stressed* the need to enhance the effectiveness of the UN and

AU in promoting comprehensive solutions to the security challenges facing the continent. They emphasized the need to review and adjust UN peacekeeping mission mandates in a timely manner, according to the actual needs of the country concerned, and the situation on the ground in line with the UN principles of peacekeeping.

7. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **welcomed** AU efforts to support early response mechanisms, including preventive action and early warning, as well as the deployment of regional forces to respond to armed conflicts. They also **welcomed** the support already provided to these efforts by the EU and other international partners, and **encouraged** the international community to lend the requisite support towards these initiatives. They **paid tribute** to the Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries for their sacrifices and commitment towards promoting peace, as well as the troops who have paid the ultimate price in service to humanity.

8. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **noted** with concern the persistent financial challenges being faced by AU-led PSOs, which negatively impact the effective implementation of their mandates. They **noted** the report of the Secretary General (S/2023/303) and the Consensus Paper on Predictable, Adequate and Sustainable Financing for African Union Peace and Security Activities, and they **underscored** the importance of predictable, sustainable, and flexible financing for AU-led peace support operations through AU and UN contributions, including the use of UN assessed contributions, in line with resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017). They **welcomed** the efforts undertaken by the AU to support regional deployment initiatives, including early response, and appealed to the international community to support these initiatives. They **took note** of the ambition of the AU Peace Fund to support such efforts, and discussed practical steps which could be taken to establish a mechanism through which AU-led peace support operations authorized by the UN Security Council and consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations would have access to UN assessed contributions, on a case by case basis, subject to relevant, agreed standards and mechanisms to ensure strategic and financial oversight and accountability in line with resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017). The two Councils **welcomed** the recent disbursement of funds from the Crisis Reserve Facility of the AU Peace Fund to support the deployment of AU-led PSOs as a demonstration of African ownership of AU-led PSOs.

9. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **committed** to continue exploring the best ways and means to improve working methods for facilitating further dialogue and cooperation on capacity building and common strategies for achieving sustainable peace and stability in Africa, particularly through structured monthly coordination meeting between the Chair of the AUPSC and the President of the UNSC, as well as in undertaking joint field and assessment missions with modalities of such trips being determined on a case-by-case basis.

10. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **underscored** the importance of advancing the youth, peace and security agenda in recognition of the essential role of the youth in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in mediation efforts towards building cohesive societies and achieving peace. They **emphasized** the need to create conducive conditions for the meaningful participation of youth in peace processes. They **stressed** the importance of creating policies for youth that would: contribute positively to peacebuilding efforts, including social and economic development; supporting projects designed to grow local economies; and provide youth employment opportunities and vocational training, fostering their education, and promoting youth entrepreneurship and constructive political engagement. They **encouraged** Member States, regional and subregional organizations to develop and implement policies and programs for youth, and to facilitate their constructive engagement, including through dedicated local, national and regional roadmaps on youth, peace and security.

11. On the occasion of the 17th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting, the AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **held** discussions on the situations in Sudan, the Sahel region, Somalia and activities of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), and in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **reaffirmed** their unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of member states.

On the situation in Sudan

The AUPSC and the Members of the UNSC:

12. **Condemned, in the strongest terms**, the relentless and unacceptable violent conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, evidenced by widespread reports of indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, looting of humanitarian supplies, and destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, as well as private property and facilities of diplomatic missions, in violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), as applicable;

13. **Expressed concern** about the dire humanitarian situation across the country, and **commended** all the neighbouring countries hosting refugees fleeing the violent conflict in Sudan. They **appealed** to the international community to extend the requisite support towards the refugees and host countries.

14. **Emphasized** that no military solution to the conflict is feasible, and **reiterated** the primacy of dialogue and reconciliation in order to realize and sustain peace in the country, and in this regard, **underscored** the urgent need for the parties to put the interests of the country and its people above all; cease hostilities immediately, and establish a permanent ceasefire. They **called upon** all parties to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Sudan, in accordance with relevant provisions of international law, and in line with the UN guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. They **called for** the resumption of the political transition process culminating in the conduct of elections towards a democratically elected, civilian-led government. They **reaffirmed** the necessity for inclusivity and participation of all Sudanese stakeholders representing all stratas of society in the political process, including civil society in Sudan, so as to ensure that the people of Sudan wholly own the peace process. They **strongly rejected** external interference which could fuel the conflict.

15. **Took note** of all regional initiatives, including the AU Roadmap for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan towards silencing the guns in Sudan, and **stressed** the importance of further enhancing collaboration and coordination of all efforts to ensure coherence of efforts accompanying Sudan to achieve lasting peace. In this regard, they **underlined** the importance of cooperation of international efforts to promote peace, including under the auspices of the AU and IGAD.

16. **Took note** of the support provided by the UN, and **urged** the UN to further assist Sudan and the neighboring countries.

On the situation in the Sahel region

The AUPSC and the Members of the UNSC:

17. **Expressed deep concern** about the worsening humanitarian situation across the region, **and** persistent insecurity, including terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism and the deterioration of the political situation in some states, as well as unconstitutional changes of government in the region. They **emphasized** the need to pursue a multidimensional approach to address the structural root causes

and drivers of insecurity in the Sahel region, including through the promotion of good governance, constitutionalism, human rights, adherence to the rule of law and democracy. They **underscored** the need for promotion of the nexus between peace, security and socio-economic development, and the prevention of the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons in the region, as well as addressing in a comprehensive manner the devastating impact of climate change on livelihoods. The two Councils **expressed concern** about the postponement of elections in some countries, thereby extending transitions, and, in this regard, they **called** on the respective Transition Governments to respect the roadmaps and timelines agreed, to return to a democratic dispensation. In this regard, they **encouraged** them to operationalize the joint transition monitoring committees in their respective countries. To this end, they **reaffirmed** the importance of committing to the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, and the inclusion of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in all stages of peace, security, development and decision-making processes.

18. **Strongly condemned** terrorist attacks and their persistent destabilising impact in the region. They **noted, with concern**, the risks of the expansion of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, to the region. They **underscored** the importance of all actors respecting IHL and IHRL and expressed the need for accountability for any violations. They **underlined** the importance of sustained efforts to comprehensively address the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, and the factors enabling such factors to thrive, including by ensuring national recovery and reconstruction, enhancing good governance and human rights and facilitating sustainable socio-economic development in Africa, while remaining in full compliance with their obligations under international law.

19. **Underscored** the importance of achieving international peace and security and the need for enhanced coordination, collaboration, transparency and complementarity of collective efforts by countries in the region, including through the promotion of dialogue, information and intelligence sharing and by conducting joint operations, in order to reinforce the overall response to the threat of terrorism and underlined the importance of further enhancing cooperation and the requisite capacity to prevent and trace illicit financial flows and to curb the flow of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). They **reiterated** the importance of continued collaboration and coordination between the UN, AU and the relevant regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, including the Accra Initiative.

20. **Concerned** by the deterioration of the security situation in Mali, and **underscoring** the responsibility of the Transition Government in Mali to ensure that the withdrawal of MINUSMA, per Mali's request, does not create a security vacuum in the country, while also ensuring the protection of civilians. They **emphasized** the importance of a safe and orderly drawdown, liquidation of, and safe passage for MINUSMA personnel out of Mali. They **requested** the Transition Government in Mali to support and guarantee the safety of MINUSMA personnel and assets throughout the drawdown and liquidation processes until the exit of the final element of MINUSMA. They also reiterated the centrality of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali for the achievement of lasting peace in Mali.

21. **Reaffirmed** the solidarity of the AU and the UN with the Governments and peoples of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), as well as the commitment of the AU and UN to continue to support them in the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of areas affected by Boko Haram activities in the Lake Chad Basin. They **welcomed** the gains being made in the security situation in the region, particularly the successful kinetic operations against Boko Haram, and **encouraged** the MNJTF to relentlessly pursue

its efforts to degrade the capacity of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the region.

22. **Expressed appreciation** to bilateral and multilateral partners for their continued support to the countries of the Lake Chad Basin region and **appealed** to them to commit additional funding for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, especially the Territorial Action Plans (TAPs) for the most affected areas in the region.

On the situation in Somalia and the activities of ATMIS

The AUPSC and the Members of the UNSC:

23. **Commended** the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) for its sustained efforts in the stabilisation and reconciliation processes in the country; for disrupting illicit funding of al-Shabaab; and liberating occupied areas. They **urged** the FGS to extend governance and state authority in the newly liberated areas, as well as to urgently implement programmes to respond to emergency needs so as to maintain the momentum against Al Shabaab, and to further build public trust, confidence and support, which are essential in ensuring long term success in operations against Al Shabaab. They **encouraged** the FGS to consider multidimensional approaches to addressing the structural root causes and drivers of instability in the country. The two Councils **requested** the FGS to provide regular detailed updates on the progress in implementing its national security architecture, force generation and integration in line with the Somalia Transition Plan (STP). They **underlined** the importance of consolidating the peace and security gains made in Somalia, and ensuring that the remaining drawdowns are carried out in a manner that mitigates against exploitation by Al-Shabaab. In this regard, they **underscored** the need for ATMIS force protection during and following the drawdown of the Mission. They **reiterated** their commitment to support national and regional efforts to degrade Al-Shabaab and to reduce the threat posed by the terrorist group.

24. **Strongly condemned** continued terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab, resulting in several deaths and the destruction of facilities and infrastructure. They **expressed grave concern** over the loss of life, destruction of property, and provocations and incitement to violence against ATMIS and Somali Security Forces. They **paid tribute** to all ATMIS Troop- and Police Contributing Countries for their continued sacrifices during peace enforcement in the country.

25. **Underlined** the need to enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing for African Union-led peace support operations authorised by the Security Council and under the Security Council's authority consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter, and **encouraged** the Secretary-General, African Union and Member States to continue efforts to explore in earnest funding arrangements for ATMIS, bearing in mind the full range of options available to the United Nations, African Union, the European Union, and to other partners, and considering the limitations of voluntary funding, in order to establish secure future funding arrangements for ATMIS.

26. They **encouraged** Member States and the international community to redouble their efforts in financially supporting ATMIS to ensure the effective implementation of its mandate until its planned exit in December 2024, while noting the request made by the FGS for a three-month extension of Phase 2 drawdown of 3000 troops, and noting in this regard PSC communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1177(2023). They **reiterated the call** for the joint convening of an international pledging conference for ATMIS operations.

On the situation in the eastern DRC

The AUPSC and the Members of the UNSC:

27. **Expressed deep concern** over the prevailing insecurity and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in eastern DRC owing to violence and human rights abuses and violations committed in eastern DRC, including by the resurgent March 23 Movement (M23), the *Coopérative pour le développement du Congo* (CODECO), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), the *Résistance pour un état de droit* (RED-Tabara), Mai-Mai groups and all other domestic and foreign non-state armed groups. They **strongly condemned** all attacks against civilians and all violations committed by the armed groups and negative forces, and the attacks against the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Furthermore, they **demand**ed that all armed groups, particularly the M23, ADF and FDLR, operating in eastern DRC immediately cease all forms of violence; permanently disband and lay down their arms; and demanded all foreign armed groups unconditionally withdraw from Congolese territory. They also **called** for all Congolese armed groups to participate in the Demobilisation, Disarmament, Community Recovery and Stabilisation Program (P-DDRCS) and to engage unconditionally in the intra-Congolese dialogue.

28. **Welcomed** the efforts by the DRC and neighbouring countries, as well as the region, towards the stability of the eastern DRC and the broader Great Lakes region, building on the commitments under the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region, as well as the Luanda and Nairobi Processes, and **called on** all parties to fully implement all the commitments made in this context. They **underscored** that the challenges facing the Great Lakes Region cannot be resolved by military means alone, and stressed the need for the continuation of political processes to address the root causes of conflict in the region. They **further welcomed** the outcome of the inaugural Quadripartite Summit of the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and Southern African Development Community (SADC), under the auspices of the AU, held in Luanda, Angola, on 27 June 2023. In this regard, they **took note** of the adoption of the “Joint Framework on Coordination and Harmonisation of Peace Initiatives in Eastern DRC by the EAC, ECCAS, ICGLR, SADC and the United Nations, under the auspices of the AU” aimed at promoting coherence of peace initiatives and delineating responsibilities and agreed timelines. They **encouraged** further political engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary General to MONUSCO and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region in support of these efforts.

29. **Took note** of the Secretary-General’s report of 2 August 2023, on options for adapting the configuration of MONUSCO and the future configuration of the UN in the country, and the letter of 1 September 2023, from the Deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DRC, and they **stressed** that the withdrawal of MONUSCO from the DRC must not create a security vacuum in the country.

30. **Emphasized** the need for sustained international humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, and food insecure populations, and the need for supporting stabilization, reconstruction, and recovery efforts in conflict-affected regions.

31. The AU PSC and the Members of the UNSC **agreed** to convene their 9th Informal Joint Seminar and the 18th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting in October 2024, in New York, United States of America, on dates to be jointly agreed by the two sides in due course, preceded by expert-level informal consultations.