



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 6 January 2023 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

I thank you for inviting the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission to submit written advice, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in connection with the briefing on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), scheduled for Tuesday, 10 January 2023 (see annex).

I kindly ask you to bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council and to issue it as a document of the Council.

*(Signed)* Muhammad Abdul **Muhith**  
Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission



## **Annex to the letter dated 6 January 2023 from the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council**

### **Written advice of the Peacebuilding Commission to the Security Council on West Africa and the Sahel, 6 January 2023**

The Peacebuilding Commission recognizes the immense potential in West Africa and the Sahel to yield sustainable peace, security and development. In line with its mandate, the Commission has continuously engaged with the West Africa and the Sahel region, on both regional and country-specific contexts, and in collaboration with United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). These engagements have been focused on supporting national ownership as well as the subregional priorities and actors, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel), the Mano River Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and The States of Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority, in partnership with regional actors such as the African Union and the African Development Bank.

Drawing on these engagements, and building upon its advice of 7 July 2022 on West Africa and the Sahel, its advice of 15 November 2022 on the G5 Sahel and its advice of 18 November 2022 on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, the Commission would like to bring the following points to the Council's attention:

The Commission remains concerned about unconstitutional changes of government in the region and welcomes the efforts of ECOWAS, with support from the African Union and the United Nations, to ensure the peaceful and timely restoration of constitutional order in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, in keeping with agreed transition timelines. The Commission also strongly condemns the alleged coup plot of 21 December 2022 aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected Government of the Gambia and calls for the respect of democracy and the rule of law in the country. The Commission reiterates the need to strengthen institutions for democracy and good governance from the perspective of the rule of law in countries under transition and remains ready to help mobilize international support for their national peacebuilding priorities.

The Commission notes with concern the continued deterioration of the security situation in the central Sahel as well as the southward spread of terrorism to coastal West Africa and condemns the increase in attacks on peacekeepers and national security forces. The Commission welcomes the launch of the joint strategic assessment of the Sahel by the African Union, the United Nations, ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel that is being conducted by an independent high-level panel led by the former President of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, and anticipates the preliminary findings of the initiative. The Commission also acknowledges the efforts of the subregion under the aegis of ECOWAS and the Accra Initiative to prevent the spread of terrorism across the Sahel and into coastal States. The Commission further welcomes the decrease in incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea resulting from increased international and regional cooperation, enhanced naval patrols and successful piracy convictions.

The Commission welcomes advances made in the consolidation of democracy in the region, including the peaceful legislative elections in Senegal in July 2022. The Commission recognizes that 10 countries in West Africa and

the Sahel will undergo elections in 2023 and offers its support for peaceful and inclusive electoral processes. The Commission underscores the importance of inclusive political dialogue in the lead-up to elections and, in this regard, welcomes the joint ECOWAS-United Nations inter-party dialogues as well as the meetings of the Inter-Party Consultative Committee led by the National Elections Commission in Liberia, and, in Guinea-Bissau, the consultations with political parties and electoral management bodies held by the President of the Republic, the President of the People's National Assembly and the Minister of Territorial Administration and Local Government. In addition, the Commission recognizes the important contributions of civil society and stresses the need to include civil society in dialogue processes.

Regarding the women and peace and security agenda, the Commission welcomes the adoption of the electoral law reform bill in Liberia, stipulating a 30 per cent quota for women among candidates in senatorial and parliamentary elections, as well as legislation in Sierra Leone providing for 30 per cent women's representation in the Cabinet, the parliament, civil service positions and private institutions. The Commission stresses, in view of the multiple electoral processes in the region in 2023, the need for greater political representation and participation of women and reiterates its call to strengthen regional frameworks and ensure the effective implementation of existing instruments on women's empowerment, gender equality and women's overall participation in the peacebuilding process.

The Commission emphasizes the need to give young people a greater voice in decision-making at the local, national and regional levels in West Africa and the Sahel. In this regard, the Commission recognizes the crucial role that UNOWAS can play in coordinating efforts to support the institutionalization of the youth and peace and security agenda and in advancing the implementation of the African Union's Continental Framework for Youth, Peace and Security. In addition, in line with the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on youth and peace and security of March 2022, the Commission encourages the strengthening of references to youth and peace and security in the terms of reference for senior UNOWAS leadership.

The Commission welcomes the progress made on transitional justice and the fight against impunity, in particular the advances in the Gambia in the transitional justice process. The Commission offers to help sustain international support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission.

The Commission is concerned by the dire humanitarian situation across the region, noting an increase in forced displacement due to instability and violence, and the continuing food crisis across the subregion caused by, inter alia, shortages of wheat and fertilizer due to global supply chains disruptions, and calls upon the international community to increase support for response plans, operations and coordination. The Commission also notes the compounding impact of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, and reiterates the need to address the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters, drought, desertification, land degradation, energy access and food insecurity. The Commission underlines the importance of supporting socioeconomic development for sustaining peace in Africa through economic development, including through transnational and transregional infrastructure development, industrialization, poverty eradication, job creation, agricultural modernization and the promotion of entrepreneurship, and expresses the need for continued support to African countries, taking into account their national priorities and needs. In this regard, the Commission also

underscores the importance of the rule of law in support of socioeconomic development. The Commission also notes that the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development policy highlights the need for undertaking comprehensive institution-building to enhance good economic governance through the reinforcement of fiscal and financial management institutions in support of effective revenue collection, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and anti-corruption structures to ensure accountability and transparency.

Lastly, the Commission recognizes the critical support provided by the Peacebuilding Fund to countries in the region and welcomes the important cross-border nature of many of the projects supported by the Fund. For example, in the Sierra Leone and Guinea border area, with Fund support, the two Governments are working more closely together on border security and common community conflicts, especially around farmer and herder issues, which are often related to transhumance. In addition, the partnership between UNOWAS and the Fund has been critical for joint political and programmatic peacebuilding support during and after unconstitutional changes of Government. The Commission reiterates the need for adequate, predictable and sustained peacebuilding financing to ensure effective responses and support to address the challenges of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the region.

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