



Security Council

Distr.: General
27 December 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 26 December 2018 from the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for 2018, as endorsed by the members of the Working Group.

I would be grateful if the present letter and the attached report could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Taye Atskeselassie **Amde**
Chair

Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa



Report of the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa for 2018

I. Introduction

1. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa is a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, established pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 31 January 2002 ([S/PRST/2002/2](#)), in which the Council recognized the need for adequate measures to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa and indicated its intention to consider the establishment of an ad hoc working group to monitor the recommendations contained in the presidential statement and to enhance coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

2. The present report of the Working Group covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Tekeda Alemu, served as Chair of the Working Group from 1 January 2017 until 30 September 2018. The Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atskeselassie Amde, served as Chair from 1 October until 31 December 2018. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire served as Vice-Chair throughout the reporting period.

II. Summary of the activities of the Working Group in 2018

3. On 11 January 2018, the Working Group held a meeting on “The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: challenges and way forward” and heard briefings by Ugo Solinas of the Africa II Division of the Office of Operations of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Abdou Abarry, Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and Ignace Gata Mavita Wa Lufuta, Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations.

4. In the concept note framing the discussion, it was noted that a year had passed since the signing of the 31 December 2016 agreement between the political actors of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the auspices of the Conférence épiscopale Nationale du Congo mediation, which had helped avert a major political crisis in that country. Implementation had faced serious obstacles, however, and the broad consensus among key political actors had continued to erode. According to the new electoral calendar, presidential and legislative national and provincial elections would be held on 23 December 2018.

5. Some speakers highlighted progress achieved with the agreement on an electoral calendar, the adoption of an electoral law and the allocation of resources for the election. Others stressed that there was a serious lack of confidence between the parties. The release of political prisoners and an environment that allowed for freedom of expression were highlighted as confidence-building measures that were needed. Some speakers noted that armed groups had a negative impact and drew attention to natural resource management, local contexts, and the humanitarian and economic situations as relevant dimensions of the situation in the country. Some speakers stressed that traditional leaders and women should be included in the political process. Others emphasized the important role of the region and called for enhanced international coordination or for benchmarks to be set to ensure that the electoral calendar stayed on track.

6. On 9 February 2018, the Working Group met to consider its activities for 2018 as proposed by the Chair. Several members expressed their support for the proposal

to hold meetings of the Working Group on country-specific items. One also suggested that the Working Group could be guided by the statement by the President of the Security Council of 18 January 2018 (S/PRST/2018/1), which had mapped a regional approach to conflict prevention and resolution, and consider a regional situation.

7. Some members also suggested enhanced interaction between the Working Group and the Peacebuilding Commission as a way to approach conflict prevention. One member encouraged greater interaction with representatives of regional and subregional organizations. In the spirit of the Working Group's mandate to undertake prevention, early warning and early action, another member suggested that the Working Group allow itself the flexibility to take up items that were not necessarily included in the provisional programme of work. Another member cautioned against the multiple repetition of meetings on the same topic.

8. After an exchange of views on the proposed activities for 2018, the members agreed to the provisional programme of work proposed by the Chair.

9. On 2 April 2018, the Working Group held a meeting on "The situation in Guinea-Bissau: challenges and way forward" and heard briefings by Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Configuration on Guinea-Bissau; Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations; Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations; and Fernando Delfim da Silva, Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations.

10. In the concept note for the meeting, it was noted that the continued political standoff and institutional paralysis in Guinea-Bissau had been a preoccupation of the Security Council and that the Council had called on stakeholders in the country to respect and comply with the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau and to create conditions for the holding of legislative and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

11. In the course of the discussion, many participants stressed the need for dialogue and electoral preparations. Several welcomed the engagement of organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau to that end. Some lamented the inability of political actors in Guinea-Bissau to work together and highlighted the importance of the people of Guinea-Bissau taking ownership and showing political will to make progress. While the international community could assist, it could not find a solution for them. Some welcomed the decision of ECOWAS to impose sanctions against 19 individuals.

12. On 31 May 2018, the Working Group considered the topic "The situation in the Central African Republic: how to avoid reversal of the gains made and sustain the peace?". Briefers at this meeting were Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Nébié Bialializoun Moussa, Head of the African Union Mission for the Central African Republic and Central Africa; Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission Configuration on the Central African Republic; and Ambroisine Kpongo, Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations.

13. The concept note for the meeting highlighted recent violence as a worrying development and suggested that it was important to closely monitor acts of incitement to violence, especially those centring on ethnic or religious affiliation. The concept

note pointed to the need for national ownership to ensure genuine and inclusive dialogue, stabilize the security situation, expand State authority and put in place inclusive governance structures. It highlighted the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation as representing an important framework for a political solution in the Central African Republic and emphasized the importance of cooperation with neighbouring States, regional organizations and the United Nations.

14. The meeting provided the members of the Working Group an opportunity to discuss recent violence, the efforts of the authorities of the Central African Republic to enhance State presence and provide security, and the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, including with regard to protecting civilians. Participants also discussed dialogue efforts, notably the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, and the need for reconciliation and to address impunity. Other issues that arose were the need to address hate speech and build trust, the importance of including women and youth in the peace process, the exploitation of natural resources, the role of the countries in the region and the support needed from the Security Council and the international community.

15. On 8 June 2018, the Working Group held a meeting on the topic “The cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council: the way forward”. The meeting was convened in connection with a visit to New York by the African Union Peace and Security Council committee of experts for a workshop on Security Council working methods, the United Nations peace and security architecture and issues, and cooperation between the two Councils. In addition to the members of the Committee of Experts, representatives of the secretariat of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, as well as the United Nations Office to the African Union, attended. It was the first meeting of its kind and, as noted in the concept note for the meeting, offered an opportunity for exchanges between expert-level representatives of Member States on the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council on ways and means of strengthening the cooperation between the two Councils on peace and security issues in Africa.

16. Representatives welcomed the convening of the meeting and stressed the importance of continuing to improve cooperation between the two Councils. Representatives pointed to the need to strive for a common understanding of issues, including the root causes of conflict, suggested enhanced information-sharing and cooperation between representatives of the African Union and the United Nations and drew attention to the timing of briefings and decision-making by the two Councils. Speakers suggested an institutionalization of exchanges between the Chair of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the President of the United Nations Security Council, for instance, by videoconference, and a harmonization of the programmes of work of the two Councils. Speakers also highlighted the role of the African members on the Security Council in conveying information to other Security Council members about the work of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

17. On the joint consultative meetings between the members of the two Councils, representatives suggested that the meetings should have clearly defined topics and be results-oriented, and suggested that exchanges on proposed agenda items and the draft joint communiqué commence months ahead of the meeting to allow representatives to concentrate on their deliberations. It was also suggested that the two Councils hold more frequent meetings, including by videoconference. Speakers also expressed views on the 12th joint consultative meeting, which would be held on 19 July 2018, including on the agenda items and the draft joint communiqué. Some remarked that the agenda should not be overburdened.

18. Speakers encouraged continued efforts to promote joint field visits, including through a discussion on modalities for such missions.

19. On 16 July 2018, the Working Group held a joint meeting with the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations on institutional reform of the African Union and its contribution in enhancing the capacity of Africa in the area of peace and security. Donald Kaberuka, African Union High Representative for Financing of the African Union and the Peace Fund, briefed the meeting participants.

20. As outlined in its concept note, the meeting was aimed at providing members with a better understanding of the ongoing institutional reform at the African Union and its significance in terms of enhancing the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the areas of peace and security.

21. Mr. Kaberuka outlined the ongoing reform processes at the African Union, including with regard to the Peace Fund, and its objectives and financing, and highlighted efforts to establish a continental free trade area in Africa. Mr. Kaberuka also highlighted the advantages of regional organizations, including with regard to legitimacy, experience, local knowledge and ability to act quickly, and the need to ensure that the African Union had the capacity to benefit from those advantages. Moreover, military means and financial resources were not enough to build peace and stability; economic prosperity, job creation and development projects were also needed.

22. In the course of the discussion, members commended reform efforts and pointed to areas that should be highlighted going forward, and stressed the need to enhance cooperation and improve the distribution of tasks between the United Nations and the African Union, along with the difficulties presented by a lack of sustained financial support for African Union peace support operations.

23. On 8 November 2018, the experts of the Working Group and the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations held a joint informal meeting to receive briefings on progress achieved on the African Union's human rights compliance frameworks for African Union peace support operations. The briefers were Ciru Mwaura, Deputy Head of the Institutional Reforms Unit; Zinurine Alghali, Chief of the Policy Development Unit of the Peace Support Operations Division of the African Union Commission; and representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

24. The briefers updated the members on the efforts of the African Union, including with regard to the Peace Fund, financial rules and regulations, predeployment training, compliance frameworks related to human rights and sexual exploitation and abuse, and cooperation between the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat. The meeting offered members an opportunity to exchange views on these and related issues, including the question of financing of African Union peace support operations.

III. Conclusions

25. During his tenure, the Chair attached significant importance to country-specific discussions in the Working Group, in addition to thematic discussions, in the hope that they might revitalize the Group's work. It is the Chair's assessment that the three country-specific meetings held in 2018 allowed for rich and constructive discussions, and that such discussions proved to be particularly useful when held prior to relevant decision-making processes in the Security Council or other subsidiary organs. The

Chair recommends that the Working Group consider including country-specific issues in future programmes of work.

26. The Working Group continues to play an essential role in facilitating preparations and exchanges on the joint consultative meetings and other joint activities of the members of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The Chair of the Working Group recalls that, in paragraph 18 of its resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#), the Council decided to follow up on the communiqués of the annual consultative meetings of the Security Council and of the Peace and Security Council, including through the Working Group. In that connection, the Chair recommends that the Working Group should continue to exercise that mandate.

27. In that regard, the Chair notes that the discussion held with the members of the African Union Peace and Security Council committee of experts in 2018 was a valuable contribution to strengthening the cooperation between the two Councils on peace and security issues in Africa and, specifically, helped prepare for the 12th joint consultative meeting, held on 19 July 2018. The Chair recommends that opportunities to hold such exchanges also be utilized in the future.
