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The **African Union (AU) summit** from 7–15 June in Johannesburg, South Africa, is likely to focus on a number of peace and security issues. These include the situation in Burundi and Libya. The AU's theme for 2015 is the 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063'.

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On the Agenda

What to expect at the Johannesburg summit

The theme of the coming African Union (AU) summit is likely to be eclipsed by pressing peace and security issues. This includes the situation in Burundi and the crisis in Libya. Xenophobia, migration and terrorism will also be high on the summit's agenda.

The 25th ordinary session of the AU Assembly takes place in Johannesburg, South Africa on 14 and 15 June 2015. This will be preceded by meetings of the permanent representatives committee, which consists of ambassadors to the AU (7 – 8 June), and of the executive council, which consists of AU member states' ministers of foreign affairs (10 – 12 June).

The official theme of the AU for 2015 is the 'Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063'. The summit is also meant to focus on this theme and will be an opportunity for AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to report on progress with the various initiatives she has launched towards gender parity and women's empowerment. This includes the role of women in peace and security. Women's empowerment was also meant to be at the heart of the January 2015 summit in Addis Ababa, but gender activists have complained that little concrete action emerged on this issue at the summit.

The theme is likely to be eclipsed by current events such as xenophobia in South Africa, migration and terrorism

Xenophobia, migration and terrorism on the agenda

As was the case in January, the theme is likely to be eclipsed by current events such as xenophobia in South Africa, migration and terrorism in Nigeria, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The spate of attacks against foreign nationals, mostly Africans, in Durban and Johannesburg in March and April this year, sparked strong reactions across Africa. On 30 April the PSC organised a debate on xenophobia, following a statement from Dlamini-Zuma condemning the violence. The summit will be an occasion for the South African government to explain its position and indicate what steps are being taken to prevent these incidents from happening again. 'It is impossible for them not to discuss xenophobia,' a high-ranking AU diplomat told the *PSC Report* in Addis Ababa.

Uppermost in the minds of many Africans as the bi-annual gathering approaches is the fate of the hundreds of African migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. According to Amnesty International, over 1 700 people have drowned in April 2015 on the perilous journey. A debate is raging in Europe on how to handle the issue and there will be pressure on the AU to announce what steps it is taking to help Africans fleeing the continent. Discussions with the European Union (EU) are crucial in this regard.

HE Diallo Amina Djibo

Ambassador of Niger to Ethiopia and permanent representative to the AU

Current members of the PSC

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

AU concerned about violence in Burundi

Meanwhile, the crises in Burundi, South Sudan and Libya are also likely to be high on the agenda at the summit. The AU has been pro-active in trying to prevent the situation in Burundi from deteriorating. Visits by AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui, Dlamini-Zuma and a delegation of the Panel of the Wise, however, have not been sufficient to prevent violent protests over the third-term bid of President Pierre Nkurunziza. On 19 May, leaders of the Economic Community of West African States considered a proposal to sanction third-term bids in the region. The proposal was rejected, notably by the presidents of Togo and The Gambia. (See adjacent article.)

The deteriorating situation in South Sudan, with new advances by rebel forces and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, will most likely also be discussed. Mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have thus far failed to bear fruit.

The crises in Burundi, South Sudan and Libya are also likely to be high on the agenda at the summit

At its previous summit-level meeting, in January 2015, the PSC's discussions were dominated by the crisis in South Sudan. A controversial report on human rights abuses in the country was postponed at the last minute. According to AU leaders this was to give ongoing talks between the protagonists a chance. There have been no new negotiations, however, since these talks were suspended in mid-March. The AU has been expected to play a greater role in future talks.

International focus on the situation in Libya

In addition, the International Contact Group on Libya is set to meet on 12 June, on the margins of the Johannesburg summit. The group consists of Libya's neighbours Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia, as well as a number of other concerned AU members. At its last meeting on 1 April in Niamey, Niger these were Angola, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Mauritania. Zimbabwe was present in its capacity as chair of the AU. In addition to international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the AU, the EU and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, France, Russia and China also attended the Niamey meeting. The chaotic situation in Libya, with two governments vying for control of the country and a myriad of armed militias, is of increasing concern to the international community.

The chaotic situation in Libya is of increasing concern to the international community

Also of great concern to the AU are the ongoing battle against Boko Haram in northern Nigeria; the continuing violence in northern Mali, despite the signing of a peace accord; and the threat posed by al-Shabaab in Somalia and neighbouring Kenya. The Joint Multi-national Task Force to combat Boko Haram, made up of countries of the Lake Chad Basin, is yet to be fully operationalised.

12 JUNE

MEETING OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONTACT
GROUP ON LIBYA

Besides the pressing peace and security issues, the ongoing stand-off between the AU leadership and the International Criminal Court (ICC) is also likely to resurface, with planned demonstrations by civil society organisations against the possible presence of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. Al-Bashir is subject to an international arrest warrant and South Africa – a state party to the ICC statute – would have to be arrested were he to set foot in South Africa to attend the summit. AU insiders say it is unlikely that al-Bashir will attend.

Newly elected Buhari the guest of honour?

Instead, the AU is likely to welcome newly elected Nigerian President Muhamadu Buhari. His presence at the summit will be important, given Nigeria's position as an economic powerhouse on the continent. It will also be an opportunity for Nigeria to reconcile with South Africa, following the recent diplomatic spat over xenophobia. Nigeria temporarily recalled its high commissioner to South Africa, allegedly to protest against the maltreatment of Nigerians citizens by South Africans.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who was elected for one year as the rotating chairperson of the AU in January this year, will chair the Johannesburg-summit. As was the case in

January, Mugabe is likely to open the summit with his trademark call for Africans to refuse external interference in their affairs and to admonish his counterparts for being too dependent on the West. Democrats on the continent viewed the 91-year-old Mugabe's election to this position as an embarrassment, but observers say there has been no visible change in AU positions since his election.

Mugabe is likely to open the summit with his trademark call for Africans to refuse external interference in their affairs

In response to criticism of the AU's continued dependence on external funding, notably from the EU, the organisation plans to make use of its being in one of Africa's richest cities by raising funds. 'Helping the AU to be self-sustaining' is one of South Africa's priorities, according to diplomats. The AU Foundation was set up by Dlamini-Zuma to help with fundraising following an internal report on 'alternative sources of funding'. The Foundation is planning a series of events in Johannesburg on the margins of the summit. The aim is to raise US\$3 million at these events. The AU's budget for 2015 is US\$522 million.

Who's who at the AU?

African Union Chairperson

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, South Africa (elected by the AU Assembly in July 2012 for a four-year term)

Deputy Chairperson

Erastus Mwencha (elected in January 2008, re-elected in July 2012 for a second term)

Commissioners

Commissioner for Peace and Security

Smail Chergui, Algeria (elected in October 2013)

Commissioner for Political Affairs

Aisha Abdullahi, Nigeria (elected in July 2012)

Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy

Elham Mahmoud Ahmed Ibrahim, Egypt (elected in January 2008; re-elected in July 2012)

Commissioner for Social Affairs

Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Sierra Leone (elected in July 2012)

Commissioner for Trade and Industry

Fatima Haram Acyl, Chad (elected in July 2012)

Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture

Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, Uganda (elected in January 2008; re-elected in July 2012)

Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology

Martial De-Paul Ikounga, Congo (elected in January 2013)

Commissioner for Economic Affairs

Anthony Mothae Maruping, Lesotho (elected in January 2013)

Note: Eight commissioners are elected by the AU Executive Council and appointed by the Assembly. Terms are for four years, renewable once. The region from which the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are appointed is entitled to one commissioner each. All other regions are be entitled to two commissioners. At least one commissioner from each region has to be a woman.

On the Agenda

Migration linked to poverty and development



On Friday 29 May 2015, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) was scheduled to discuss the issue of migration, under the theme of 'poverty and security in Africa'. The AU has several instruments that deal with migration and is cooperating closely with the European Union (EU) regarding the current migration crisis in the Mediterranean.

The dramatic increase in the number of migrants who have died this year while trying to cross the Mediterranean from Libya has cast the crisis of African migration in a new light. April 2015 has been the worst month thus far for African migrants attempting to cross to Europe via the Mediterranean. Close to 1 400 migrants, mostly from Africa, died in less than two weeks in April. This brought the death toll at sea close to 2 000 since the beginning of 2015. The growing number of deaths of immigrants from West, East and North Africa trying to get to Europe has led to calls for a more effective mechanism to deal with this crisis.

Close to 1 400 migrants, mostly from Africa, died in less than two weeks in April

African migrants prey to human traffickers

The migrant situation has become so serious that the Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, referred to the traffickers of humans as 'the slave traders of the 21st century'. Thousands of Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans have also died in the past seven years in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea while attempting to cross to Yemen.

Additionally, the xenophobic attacks in South Africa against African migrants grabbed the attention of the AU and the international community in April 2015. The attacks, which started in Durban, in the country's KwaZulu-Natal province, resulted in the displacement of thousands of African immigrants and in the death of at least six people. The attacks were widely condemned and raised serious questions about the integration project of the AU, which has as one of its cornerstones the freedom of movement of all Africans. The PSC held a meeting to discuss xenophobia on 30 April.

The plight of African immigrants in Yemen was also highlighted on 21 April when an air strike by Saudi Arabian forces hit an aid office

The plight of African immigrants in Yemen was also highlighted on 21 April when an air strike by Saudi Arabian forces hit an aid office, killing five Ethiopians. The incident happened while the government of Ethiopia was working to repatriate tens of thousands of Ethiopians from the conflict-ridden Yemen. Days before the attack, hundreds of Ethiopians had been evacuated from the country.

2 000

THE APPROXIMATE
NUMBER OF MIGRANT
DEATHS AT SEA SINCE THE
BEGINNING OF 2015

Beyond the above examples, the issue of migration within Africa and outside the continent is topping the political and security agenda in countries across the continent and in the regional economic communities.

AU instruments on migration

The AU has numerous legal documents and instruments that deal with migration. The most prominent of these include the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, also known as the OAU Refugee Convention, which has been ratified by 45 of the 54 member states. Other examples are the Ouagadougou Declaration on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons of 2006, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region's Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, the 2006 AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the 2006 African Common Position on Migration and Development, the Joint Africa–EU Declaration on Migration and Development, and the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children.

Migration is one of the major issues that mark Africa–Europe relations

The 2009 AU Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa, in Kampala, Uganda also adopted the AU Convention for Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. This is the latest addition to the AU's normative framework on migration.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development both deal with broader issues linked to the root causes of migration.

Cooperation with partners

Migration is one of the major issues that mark Africa–Europe relations. Many European countries are reluctant to increase quotas for African immigrants and are concerned about the influx of illegals from Africa and elsewhere.

Developments in North Africa in 2011 and the subsequent deterioration in the security and stability of the region have led to an increase in illegal immigration across the Mediterranean. The situation is exploited by terrorist groups and networks of human traffickers.

The meeting between leaders of the EU and the AU in Brussels on 22 April 2015 mostly focused on migration from Africa to Europe. The meeting, which was co-chaired by the European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and chairperson of

the AU Commission Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, discussed the current crisis.

This is not the first time that the EU and the AU have addressed this issue. The Africa–EU Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership was launched at the second Africa–EU Summit of Heads of State and Government in December 2007 in Lisbon.

The efforts of a single country or region could never stop human trafficking or irregular migration

The 2007 meeting saw the adoption of the Joint EU–Africa Strategy and the First Action Plan (2008–2010). The new strategy agreed upon at the EU–Africa Summit in Brussels last year is aimed at combating and preventing illegal migration. An action plan for 2014–2017 was also drawn up at the summit.

The root causes of migration

Beyond the forced migration of people due to conflict and natural disasters, people leave their country of origin for political and economic reasons. Bad governance contributes to poverty and conflict, which contributes to unemployment, migration and refugee flows.

At the last AU–EU meeting in April, Dlamini-Zuma noted that the efforts of a single country or region could never stop human trafficking or irregular migration. She noted that resolving the crisis requires an urgent coordinated regional and global response and called for more dialogue and cooperation between the countries of migration origin, transit and destination. She emphasised the need to focus on eradicating poverty and creating job opportunities for young Africans.

Expected outcomes of the PSC meeting

The PSC meeting was expected to discuss the socio-economic causes of migration and decide on short-term responses, which will include cooperation on effective border and migration management and the security and safety of migrants in and outside the continent. Ensuring migration is safe and secure through making it voluntary and legal requires serious commitment from AU member states in adopting the various instruments on democracy, governance and migration and monitoring their proper implementation.

Respect for human rights in the countries of origin and the creation of appropriate conditions for young people are also expected to feature on the agenda of the scheduled meeting of the Council. The current crisis also requires an urgent response against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime.

Situation Analysis

Third-term bids a threat to stability



Is there anything the AU can do to prevent political instability linked to the extension of presidential term limits? This will be one of the questions asked by observers and participants at the upcoming 25th AU summit.

Bids by incumbents to run for a third term as head of state, regardless of whether the relevant constitution imposes term limits or not, have created an atmosphere of potential conflict in a number of African countries.

Violent protests in Burundi

The current crisis in Burundi, where protests against the candidacy of President Pierre Nkurunziza in the upcoming elections are ongoing, is an example of what can happen when leaders refuse to step down. Dozens of people have been killed and thousands have fled to Tanzania due to the violence, which was compounded by a failed coup attempt on 14 May. The presidential elections planned for 26 June could still be postponed, but Burundi was plunged into chaos by a situation that the international community was clearly unable to prevent.

International organisations such as the United Nations raised the alarm in the middle of last year, based on their own interpretation of Burundi's constitution, when it became clear that Nkurunziza was determined to stand for re-election.

Article 96 of the constitution states that the president is elected by universal suffrage with the first mandate renewable once, thereby limiting the presidency to two mandates. However, because Burundi's constitution came about after years of civil war, the drafters included article 302, which states that the first post-transition president should be elected through an indirect vote in Parliament. Nkurunziza and the ruling CNDD-FDD now insist that the first presidential term (2005–2010) does not count as a first term, since Nkurunziza was elected by a vote of Parliament and not a popular vote.

The current crisis in Burundi is an example of what can happen when leaders refuse to step down

Meanwhile, the Arusha peace agreement, which ended the civil conflict in Burundi, states very clearly that the president should only serve two terms of five years each. Most international observers and the opposition believe that the constitution should be read within the framework of the Arusha Accords. The accords are also referenced in the preamble of the constitution.

AU preventative diplomacy

Since the start of the crisis, the AU has been praised for its proactive stance. AU Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui visited Burundi several times in 2014 and 2015. AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma also travelled to the country in March this year, before the attempted coup. She subsequently



PIERRE NKURUNZIZA HAS BEEN THE PRESIDENT OF BURUNDI SINCE 2005

made a strong statement calling for the elections to be postponed. She said in an interview that, according to most interpretations, Burundi's constitution does not provide for a third presidential term. Dlamini-Zuma also said the AU could not send observers to the elections given the current atmosphere of violence and with refugees fleeing the country.

Since the start of the crisis, the AU has been praised for its proactive stance

The 15-member PSC has met several times since the beginning of the protests to discuss the situation in Burundi. Burundi is a member of the Council and was elected for two years in 2014. On 14 May, at its most recent meeting on Burundi, the PSC expressed its deep concern over the situation and emphasised 'the AU's responsibilities as guarantor of the 2000 Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Burundi'. The AU also 'underlines its determination to fully assume its role and to take all measures that the situation in Burundi requires, in accordance with its mandate'. The PSC's statement further calls for dialogue and consensus on finding 'a lasting political solution' under the auspices of the AU and the East African Community, which has been seized of the situation in Burundi.

On 9 May the AU sent a high-level delegation – chaired by former Togolese prime minister Edem Kodjo, who is a member of the Panel of the Wise, and including former Senegalese foreign minister Ibrahima Fall – to Burundi. The delegation has up to now failed to either kick-start the dialogue called for by the PSC or persuade Nkurunziza to renounce his candidature.

The PSC statement of 14 May also mentions the deployment of human rights observers to Burundi to 'report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law'.

The PSC's statement further calls for dialogue and consensus on finding a lasting political solution under the auspices of the AU and the East African Community

In hindsight, could the AU have done better? AU insiders say that in this case, the organisation's hands were tied because of the reluctance on the part of heads of state to intervene before the crisis escalated. 'We asked the heads of state over and over to do something about Burundi, but no-one wanted to,' explains a high-ranking AU diplomat. Now, it seems too late and the situation is in the hands of Burundians.

Lessons from Burkina Faso

At the end of last year, violence also broke out in Burkina Faso because former president Blaise Compaoré insisted on a referendum in an attempt to change the constitution to provide for a third presidential term. Compaoré was ousted through popular protests just before parliamentarians could vote on holding the referendum. The AU threatened to suspend Burkina Faso for two weeks following the overthrow of Compaoré in early November 2014. The PSC restored the country's membership to the AU on 17 November after an interim civilian-led government was nominated.

17 NOVEMBER
2014

BURKINA FASO'S AU
MEMBERSHIP IS RESTORED

The way the AU handled the crisis in Burkina Faso raised many questions. It was pointed out at the time that stronger conflict-prevention mechanisms were needed in cases where observers and the international community agreed that violence was almost inevitable.

Are there any lessons from the situations in Burundi and Burkina Faso for similar cases in other African countries? They include the following:

- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supporters of President Joseph Kabila are advocating that he should be allowed to stand for election in 2016. He came to power in 2001 after his father died and was elected twice, in 2006 and 2011.
- In the Republic of Congo, ruling party members are also calling for a possible extended mandate for President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. He has been in power twice – first from 1979 to 1992, and again from 1997.
- In Rwanda, President Paul Kagame has also not indicated whether he plans to step down when his term expires in 2016. He has been president of Rwanda since 2000. Some of Kagame's supporters have started a campaign to change the constitution to allow him another term, while the opposition is firmly opposed to this change.

What can be done?

One possible avenue is a statutory agreement among AU member states that limits presidential terms to two mandates. This could be similar to the Lomé Agreement of 2000, which condemns unconstitutional changes of government. As with the Lomé Agreement, this would apply only to current situations and would not be backdated.

However, given the practice of decision-making by consensus within the AU, this is unlikely in the short term. On 19 May such a proposal was in fact put to the heads of state of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at its meeting in Accra, Ghana. According to reports, the motion was opposed by The Gambia and Togo. The Gambia's leader, Yaya Jammeh, has been in power since 1994 and is now serving his 4th term in office. In Togo, President Faure Gnassingbé was controversially re-elected for a third term earlier this year, amid street protests against his candidacy. There are no term limits in Togo's constitution and Gnassingbé's father, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, ruled the country for 38 years until his death in 2005.

ECOWAS is one of the few regional organisations that have rejected incumbents' manipulation of constitutions in an attempt to prolong their mandates. In 2009 ECOWAS sanctioned Niger after former president Mamadou Tandja suspended Parliament

and then won a referendum to change the constitution, scrapping term limits.

Many other African heads of state, including the AU's current chairperson, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, are unlikely to support a motion for a binding restriction on term limits. 'The best we can hope for is for those heads of states to stand up in a closed session and tell the others not to do it [stand for a third term],' a senior AU diplomat said in Addis Ababa.

ECOWAS is one of the few regional organisations that has rejected incumbents' manipulation of constitutions

Even this will be difficult to pull off, AU insiders say, since there are not many heads of state who will be willing to risk such a bold move.

The AU's early warning and preventative diplomacy, together with pressure from the international community, is likely to be the only tool available to the continental institution to prevent more crises from erupting. Pressure is likely to be applied to heads of state, behind closed doors, by peers and non-African donor countries. In the case of Burundi, United States Secretary of State John Kerry asked that Burundi's constitution be respected and Belgium withdrew election funding, but this did not dissuade Nkurunziza.

Civil society movements across Africa, however, have taken a strong stance on the issue of term limits. Protest action in Burundi is still not showing signs of abating, despite the strong response from the government.

AU documents

Press release, The African Union confirms the imperative and urgency of dialogue and consensus in Burundi, 16 May 2015 (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc.com.burundi.16-05-2015.pdf>)

Communiqué, 501st meeting of the PSC on Burundi, 28 April 2015 (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc.br.501.burundi.28-04-2015.pdf>)

Communiqué, 468th meeting of the PSC on Burkina Faso, 18 November 2014 (<http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-468-com-burkina-faso-18-11-2014.pdf>)

Other

Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 28 August 2000 (<http://www.issafrica.org/cdburundipeaceagreements/No%201%20arusha.pdf>)



Addis Insight

African unity: how far have we come?

Celebrations were held across the continent last month to commemorate Africa Day. It is pertinent to look at what has been achieved in the last 13 years, since the creation of the AU in 2002, towards a more unified Africa.

Africa Day, celebrated on 25 May, commemorates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity, the predecessor to the AU, in 1963. At the time, African leaders raised hopes of one, united Africa, without trade or political barriers. Continued economic integration is seen as one of the most important building blocks of African unity, as was the case with the European Union.

Economic integration hampered by indifference

Outgoing African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka, however, says that economic integration in Africa over the last 50 years has been slower than in other regions of the world. In an editorial published by the European Centre for Policy Development Management, Kaberuka says that this is largely due to 'political indifference at a national level'.

The 'decades-long prevarication' to implement real economic integration, despite ambitious documents ranging from the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 to those establishing the New Partnership for Africa's Development in 2000, has had a devastating effect on the continent. Intra-African trade – the theme of two AU summits, in 2012 – remains lower than that of any other continent. The lack of continental strategies in the airline industry, for example, has caused a 'structural logjam,' which means travelling within Africa is more expensive than elsewhere, says Kaberuka.

African leaders raised hopes of one, united Africa, without trade or political barriers

Much is being done on an institutional level, however, to rectify this. In January, AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma announced that discussions about the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision had been held during the AU summit. A number of countries had reportedly joined the 'open skies' initiative, which is aimed at 'deregulating air services and ... opening regional air markets to transnational competition.'

The AU adopted a plan in 2012 aimed at achieving continental economic integration by 2017. This is not likely to be realised, but regional economic communities have become more robust. The East African Community (EAC), for example, is rapidly moving towards a full-fledged free trade zone and increasingly improving links with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which has 19 member countries.

Some critics, however, say the multiplication of overlapping institutions within the AU framework is hampering some of the existing structures and adding unnecessary costs to the unification project. Members of COMESA are also members of the Southern African Development Community or the EAC.

PSC plays an important political role

In terms of political integration, the increasing role of the 15-member AU PSC in mediating in conflict, together with the regional economic communities, has been evident in the last decade. This year, the PSC has been supporting the mediation efforts in Mali and South Sudan (led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and has been seized with the crisis in Burundi ever since objections started against President Pierre Nkurunziza's third-term bid.

The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, and AU Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma made several visits to Burundi when it became evident that political instability was being triggered by the third-term bid. Earlier this month, in the midst of increasing violence in the country, the AU dispatched a team of its Panel of the Wise, led by former Togolese prime minister, Edem Kodjo. The EAC and other regional institutions, like the Intergovernmental Conference on the Great Lakes Region, have also held discussions to try and solve the crisis in Burundi.

Internal divisions among heads of state, however, often hamper these efforts. While some African leaders, for example, could support the idea of imposing continent-wide presidential term limits, there is no united AU position against third-term candidatures.

Towards establishing the African Standby Force

Military cooperation with the aim of establishing an African Standby Force (ASF) remains a challenge, but a continental African force that can intervene in conflicts might no longer be just a pipe dream. Later this year, the Amani II field exercise in South Africa will include regional standby brigades from across Africa, and is seen as the beginning of the standby force becoming operative.

Even before the full establishment of the ASF, several regional military interventions have been launched, like the Economic Community of West African States' intervention in Mali, the Economic Community of Central African States' intervention in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the current effort by the Lake Chad Basin countries to root out Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. Some of these, like the intervention in Mali and the CAR, have since been taken over by the United Nations. The African Mission in Somalia and Sudan are also examples of continent-wide military cooperation.

Institutional progress towards African unity has been marred, however, by incidents affecting ordinary Africans that the AU Commission in Addis Ababa can do little about. This includes xenophobia in South Africa, where African immigrants have been targeted. Also smacking of xenophobia and a lack of solidarity is the fact that some countries, like Zambia, initially reacted to the Ebola crisis by closing their borders. The situation in Libya and the cruelty inflicted upon desperate migrants trying to flee to Europe is another setback for integration. Xenophobia in South Africa and the government's response to it, as well as the immigration crisis, will however be on the agenda at the 25th AU summit taking place in Johannesburg.

Infrastructure linking the continent and enabling the free movement of goods and people is a crucial first step towards continental integration. Strong leadership by committed pan-Africanists, not only African leaders, is however also needed to revive the idea of true African unity.

2017

THE DEADLINE SET
FOR AFRICAN
ECONOMIC INTEGRATION



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



GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The publication of the *PSC Report* is made possible through support from the Government of the Swiss Federation, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the government of New Zealand 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.

About us

The *Peace and Security Council (PSC) Report* is an initiative of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) through its office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was established in 2009 with the principal aim of supporting and complementing the work of the African Union (AU) and its Peace and Security Council by providing regular, independent and research-based information on and analysis of the PSC and its activities. The *PSC Report* offers the wider constituency of the AU, as well as African civil society organisations, the media and the international diplomatic community a reliable means of following and tracking the work of the PSC.

The *PSC Report* accomplishes these objectives through the publication of regular reports on issues that are either on the PSC's agenda or which deserve its attention. Through its webpage dedicated exclusively to the ISS' work on the PSC, the *PSC Report* also offers regular updates on current and emerging agenda items of the PSC.

The *PSC Report* has no institutional relationship with the AU or the PSC. However, the *Report* works in close collaboration with the AU Peace and Security Department, the Secretariat of the PSC and member states of the PSC.

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