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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
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REPORT

FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION
TO EGYPT AND TO PORT SUDAN, 1 TO 4 OCTOBER 2024

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. From 1 to 3 October 2024, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), led by H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Gad, the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month October 2024, and accompanied by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, undertook a mission to Cairo, Egypt, where consultations were held with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS), The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Egyptian Peacekeeping Operations Training Center as an AU Centre of Excellence. The PSC also convened its 1234th meeting in Cairo on 2 October 2024, which was dedicated to the theme: *"The Peace, Security, and Development Nexus in Africa: Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Practice."* On 3 October 2024, the PSC undertook a one-day field visit to Port Sudan, in Sudan. Below is a summary of the key outcomes.

B. CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

2. On 1 October 2024, in Cairo, Egypt, the PSC held a consultation with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS), H.E. Ahmed Abou El Gheit, who warmly welcomed the PSC Delegation. He decried the ongoing conflicts in some LAS Members, which are also AU member states, and impacting negatively on the African continental peace and security landscape, namely, the conflict in Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. He condemned the ongoing aggression by Israel in the Gaza Strip and the Israeli campaign in Lebanon, which have resulted in massive loss of life, and unprecedented population displacements, and destruction of critical infrastructure. He underscored the importance of harmonization and complementarity of efforts between the AU and the LAS in addressing threats to peace and security in the Afro-Arab countries and also in the Red Sea area. He also emphasized the urgent need for reviving and further enhancing the cooperation and collaboration between the AU and the LAS, bearing in mind that ten (10) LAS Members are Afro-Arab countries. Furthermore, he underlined the need for the PSC to always take into consideration the peculiar contexts of conflict situations in Afro-Arab countries. Emphasis was also laid on the need to revive and regularize the annual joint consultative meetings, as well as the need for extension of invitations to meetings, including the Summits of each side on issues of common interest and concern.

3. On behalf of the PSC, H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Gad expressed gratitude to the LAS for hosting the PSC Delegation. The PSC Members commended the LAS for its unwavering commitment to continuing to cooperate and collaborate with the AU in addressing issues of mutual concern regarding peace, security, and stability, particularly in Afro-Arab countries. The PSC underscored the importance of further strengthening the cooperation between the organizations in the promotion of peace and security in the Afro-Arab countries. They also emphasized the need for ensuring regular interactions/dialogue, systematic collaboration, and sharing of information between the two sides, including the resuming of the AUPSC and LAS Permanent Representatives Meetings. They also called for the two sides to agree on joint working methods drawing from the working methods between the AU PSC and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs).

C. MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

4. Also on 1 October 2024, the PSC Delegation paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Badr Abdelatty, who shared with the PSC the perspectives of Egypt on the current peace and security dynamics in the region and the priorities of Egypt as the PSC Chair for the month of October 2024. The Minister stressed that the geo-strategic location of Egypt makes it extremely vulnerable to most of the conflicts in the region, particularly the conflict in Sudan, in Libya, and Gaza, as well as in Yemen, and the Horn of Africa which have resulted in the influx of millions of refugees from these countries, which is straining the capacity of the country. He further indicated that, Egypt had lost more than 6 billion US Dollars due to the decline of Suez Canal revenues as a result of these conflicts. In addition, he wished the PSC fruitful consultations in Port Sudan and urged the Council to devote high priority to Sudan.;

5. Furthermore, the Minister stressed that the AU and LAS should work together, ideally, as the lead coordinators on Sudan, in order to find a lasting solution to the situation in Sudan. He underscored the importance of Sudanese ownership of the solution to end the current crisis;

6. The Minister asserted the importance of preserving the unity, territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the need to support its institutions, and to expedite all steps towards the establishment of the new AU Support and Stabilization Mission (AUSSOM).

7. The Minister outlined Egypt's perspective and efforts concerning the situation in Sudan, including launching the Initiative of Neighboring Countries of Sudan, the active participation in different tracks to reach a solution to the Sudanese crisis, and hosting the Cairo Conference for Sudanese Political and Civilian forces in July that reasserted the Sudanese ownership of the political process. He highlighted as well the Egyptian efforts that led to the reopening of the Adre border crossing on the Sudanese – Chadian borders to facilitate the crossing of the humanitarian aid. The Minister stressed on the burden that Egypt is bearing due to the crisis. He assured that the African Union needs to revise its policy by which it suspended the membership of several African countries including Sudan, in order to allow positive engagement of the AU with these countries, and enhance their transitional process in accordance with the principle of African solutions for African problems to leave no space for foreign intervention.

8. The Minister congratulated AUPSC members on the 20th Anniversary of the AUPSC and he highlighted the importance of reforming the AUPSC especially with regard to its composition in line with the ongoing efforts of the African Continent to reform the UNSC.

9. The Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security commended the Minister for his leadership, as illustrated during the recent meeting on counterterrorism that was held in New York. He also commended Egypt for hosting the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Center and for the concrete steps being taken by Egypt to ensure full facilities for the Centre, which will be beneficial to the entire African Continent; while the Minister urged the AUC to expedite the full operationalization of the Centre.

10. The PSC expressed deep appreciation to the Government of Egypt for facilitating the organization of the visit, including the field visit to Port Sudan. In addition, the PSC commended Egypt for its continuous and important contribution to the AU peace and security agenda on the Continent, including its contribution to AU Peace Support Operations and UN Peacekeeping Missions. The PSC also expressed solidarity with the people of Egypt in the face of the negative effects of the conflicts in the region.

**D. 1234TH MEETING ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT:
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE**

11. On 2 October 2024, in Cairo, the PSC convened its 1234th meeting that was dedicated to the theme: *“The Nexus between Peace, Security and Development in Africa: Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice”*. The PSC agreed to adopt the Communique for the meeting through the established practice of Silence Procedure.

E. VISIT TO THE POLICE ACADEMY AND EGYPTIAN CENTRE FOR PEACEKEEPING TRAINING

12. On 2 October 2024, the PSC Delegation visited the Egyptian Police Academy and the Egyptian Peacekeeping Operations Training Center where H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye and Major General Hani Abu El Makarem, Assistant Minister of Interior and President of the Police Academy, signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and the Egyptian Peacekeeping Operations Training Center. The Centre is a highly distinguished and reputable African Centre of Excellence, which is significantly contributing towards building the capacity of the police component of the AU Peace Support Operations and UN peacekeeping missions in Africa.

F. FIELD MISSION TO PORT SUDAN

13. On 3 October 2024, the PSC Delegation undertook a mission to Port Sudan, where it held consultations with the representatives of the Government, including the Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and Commander of the Sudanese Armed Forces, H.E. Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al Burhan; the Attorney-General, H.E. Mohammed Al Fatih Tayfour who is also the Head of the National Commission of Inquiry into Crimes and Violations of National and International Humanitarian Law; General Ibrahim Gaber, member of the Transitional Sovereignty Council, Chairman of the Supreme Committee for Humanitarian Affairs; the Darfur Regional Governor, H.E. Suliman Arcua Minnawi (Minni Minawi); civil society organizations, religious leaders and political parties.

14. The field mission to Port Sudan, as mandated by numerous PSC Communiqués,¹ had a number of objectives. First, as an expression of the AU's solidarity with the Government and the people of Sudan, as well as a reaffirmation of the continued commitment of the AU to accompany Sudan in efforts aimed at ensuring a successful transition. Second, to constructively engage the leadership of the Transitional Sovereignty Council and other key Sudanese stakeholders, with a view to having a better understanding of their perspectives regarding practical means and ways of successfully ending the current crisis, including the sticking points in the ongoing peace process and challenges that need urgent attention. The PSC also sought to gather first-hand information on the prevailing political, security, social, economic, and humanitarian situation on the ground. This first-hand information is critically necessary to the extent that it enables the PSC to adopt evidence-based, and thus informed decisions on the next steps in supporting the transition process in the country, including assessing means to facilitate the engagement of Sudan in the African Union and its efforts to reach a sustainable solution in Sudan, as well as the necessary steps needed to lifting of the suspension of Sudan from AU activities.

15. The Sudanese interlocutors welcomed the visit by the PSC Delegation as long overdue and reiterated their desire for confirmation of Sudan's continued membership in the AU family and a reaffirmation of the solidarity and continued support of the AU to the Sudanese people and:

- a) Expressed their appreciation for the PSC visit to Sudan, which the majority mentioned is long overdue, and this is a reaffirmation that AU is with the people of Sudan. There was an observation that the PSC mission to Port Sudan was too short to allow the PSC to have intensive consultations with all stakeholders;
- b) Expressed displeasure over the AU PSC decision to suspend Sudan from participation in the activities of the AU in October 2021. In fact, they felt that the AU did not fully understand the realities of the Sudanese situation. They requested the PSC to immediately lift the suspension. They implored the PSC to review the AU sanctions policy;
- c) Blamed the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for triggering the current conflict. They all condemned the activities of the RSF whom they accused of committing serious atrocities and crimes in the country, particularly in Darfur, including indiscriminately killing of civilians, sexual violence against women and girls, recruitment of child soldiers and mercenaries, wanton destruction of property and vital infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, factories, bridges and roads, as well as property of diplomatic missions and international organizations, as well as looting and plundering the country's resources;
- d) Also blamed the scorched earth policy of the RSF for the food insecurity in parts of the country affected by the current conflict and the use of hunger as a weapon of war;
- e) Requested the AU to stop the impression of treating the RSF and the Sudanese Armed Forces as if they were constitutionally and politically of the same status, adding that only the Sudanese Armed Forces enjoy legitimacy;
- f) Condemned foreign interference in the internal affairs of Sudan and what they described as the conspiracies and hostilities by some neighboring countries, as well as the recent media pronouncements attributed to an official from the US Government on the need for the deployment of an African Union force in Sudan. As such, they strongly urged the

¹ PSC Communiqué no 1041 (26 October 2021); PSC Communiqué no 1050 (24 November 2021); PSC Communiqué no 1060 (25 January 2022); PSC Communiqué no 1117 (2 November 2021); PSC Communiqué no 1137 (6 February 2023); PSC Communiqué no 1149 (16 April 2023); PSC Communiqué no 1209 (18 April 2024); PSC Press Statement no 1213 (21 May 2024); PSC Press Statement no 1228 (19 August 2024)

concerned countries to immediately stop such deplorable practices and instead, engage more constructively in the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis. They requested the AU to respond formally by refuting calls for an intervention in Sudan;

- g) Also condemned the recruitment of child soldiers and mercenaries, as well as the occupation of civilian installations by the RSF and demanded their immediate withdrawal from such installations and all regions currently under their occupation as necessary preconditions for negotiations to end the current crisis;
- h) Emphasized that any steps towards ending the current crisis and the restoration of normalcy in Sudan, should start with the condemnation of the RSF. H.E. Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan added the vision of Sudan, which included two critical steps, namely: i) Ending the war and the establishment of consensually agreed cantonment areas/assembly points; and ii) Resumption of the democratic/ civilian-led political transition;
- i) Reaffirmed the commitment and readiness of Sudan, as an integral Member of the AU family, to African Solutions to African Problems. However, they stressed the need for the AU and the PSC in particular, to play a lead role, have more leverage, and ensure common messaging on the peace process for Sudan;
- j) Reaffirmed the commitment to restore a civilian-led transitional authority provided that the civilian political groups are united;
- k) Expressed appreciation to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and other partners for their continued support to the people of Sudan; and
- l) Rejected the imposition of any foreign interference in the current crisis;

16. On its part, the AUPSC Delegation:

- a) Reaffirmed the solidarity of the AU with the Government and people of Sudan in their aspirations to restore lasting peace, security and stability, and prosperity in their country for the benefit of, not only the people of Sudan, but all neighbouring countries, the entire Horn of Africa region and the wider African Continent;
- b) Reaffirmed the AU commitment to respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan. In this context, the Delegation condemned all forms of external interference in the internal affairs of Sudan;
- c) Emphasized the importance of preserving and protecting the Sudanese State institutions, protection of civilians and facilitation of humanitarian access;
- d) Also emphasized that, to be successful, any solution to the current crisis in Sudan must be Sudanese-owned and led with the support of the neighboring countries, the region (IGAD and LAS), the Continent (AU), and the international community (UN and partners);
- e) Stressed that there can be no viable military solution to the current crisis and in this regard, underscored the urgent need for the belligerents to stop pursuing military means, which can only result in more losses of lives, destruction of infrastructure and the environment, as well as the economy; population displacements and derailed national development;

- f) Strongly urged the warring parties to prioritize the supreme interests of Sudan and its people, and immediately and unconditionally cease all hostilities and pursue a negotiated political settlement; and underlined the centrality of an all-Sudanese genuine and inclusive dialogue, as the only viable path towards a consensual and durable solution to the current crisis;
- g) Expressed deep concern over the unprecedented catastrophic humanitarian situation prevailing in the country, including the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, and wanton destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, water purification and electricity generation plants, as well as attacks against the facilities of diplomatic missions, in blatant violation of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, as well as the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;
- h) Emphasized the efficacy of African Solutions to African Problems and, in this respect, strongly urged the warring sides to have faith in the AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Sudan Crisis, and encouraged them to extend full cooperation to the AU High-Level Panel; the Neighboring States Initiative, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); UN and the League of Arab States (LAS);
- i) Expressed the desire and the need for the AU to increase its engagement with Sudan, including on the path to lifting the suspension of Sudan from AU activities, once predetermined steps are met.
- j) Urged the Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council to provide his support and cooperation to the PSC Presidential Ad Hoc Committee on Sudan which is planning to hold its meeting on 23 October 2024 in Entebbe, Uganda; and
- k) Assured the Sudanese government that the AU-PSC will not relent on its support to the people of Sudan and that it will continue to do the best possible to find a consensual and sustainable solution to the current crisis.

G. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The PSC noted a strong sense of displeasure by the stakeholders towards the African Union's suspension of Sudan from AU activities and the use of equal treatment for both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Standby Forces. The PSC may wish to emphasize that more needs to be done by the PSC and AU mechanisms on Sudan to alleviate this impression and to present what the AU is doing to resolve the war in Sudan.

18. The PSC may wish to express the need to provide clarification to the officials in Sudan to engage and clarify the PSC decisions on Sudan, particularly on suspension, and to prioritize engagement on a path towards lifting the suspension.

19. The PSC may wish to strongly condemn the violence in Sudan, including the widespread and systemic sexual and gender-based violence such as the use of rape as a weapon of war, as well as the perpetration of violations against children, the looting of humanitarian supplies, the destruction of civilian infrastructure including hospitals and schools, and the occupation of civilian buildings and houses and the forced displacement of their owners.

20. The PSC may wish to condemn the violent clashes and unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur and demand that the Rapid Support Forces urgently lift the siege on the city of EL Fasher, and ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the populations in Sudan suffering from acute food insecurity, and to emphasize that there is no viable and sustainable military solution to the conflict.

21. The PSC may wish to urge the warring parties to implement the agreements reached in the Jeddah Declaration of 11 May 2023 relating to humanitarian access and protection of civilians and withdrawal from civilian homes and buildings and demand them to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the population in need, and welcomes the decision of the Government of Sudan to open the Adre border crossing from Chad to North Darfur and the commitments to allow humanitarian aid through Dabbah.

22. The PSC may wish to reiterate its demand to the warring parties to prioritize the supreme interests of Sudan and its people, and immediately and unconditionally cease all hostilities and pursue a negotiated political settlement; and underline the centrality of an all-Sudanese genuine and inclusive dialogue, as the only viable path towards a consensual and durable solution to the current crisis. In this regard, request the AU Commission to continue facilitating the intra-Sudanese dialogues, and coordinate with other efforts in this regard.

23. The PSC may wish to appeal for the scaling up of humanitarian assistance to the People of Sudan and all neighboring countries currently hosting Sudanese refugees in the spirit of solidarity and urge international partners to expedite the fulfillment of the financial pledges.

24. The PSC may also wish to strongly reject any external interference on Sudan that prolongs the conflict, and call the international community and key stakeholders on the situation in Sudan to ensure coordination of efforts under the leadership of the AU, in close coordination with IGAD and the neighbouring countries with a view to ensure a successful peace process, while emphasizing that any solution to the current crisis in Sudan must be Sudanese-owned.

25. The PSC may wish to engage with the Government of Sudan officials regarding the two proposals made by Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council: i) Ending the war and the establishment of consensually agreed cantonment areas/assembly points; and ii) Resumption of the democratic/civilian-led political transition, particularly in the light that the Charman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council has declared his openness to the formation of a civilian government.

26. The PSC may wish to request the AU Commission to support the High-Level Panel on Sudan and the PSC Presidential Ad Hoc Committee to enhance their engagement with Sudan, IGAD and its neighboring countries, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in the implementation of the AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Crisis in Sudan, including its key pillars of comprehensive and unconditional ceasefire, humanitarian access, and protection of civilians, and report back to the PSC.

27. The PSC may wish to request that the African Union Chairperson explore means to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to Sudan through its relevant bodies and agencies, inter alia, the African Union CDC, AUDANEPAD, and the PRC Subcommittee on refugees, and to submit the report within 10 days due to the urgent nature of the situation.

28. The PSC may wish to Request the AU Commission to reopen the AU Office to Sudan in Port Sudan, with minimum staffing, taking into consideration the security situation, to inter alia, allow AU's engagements with the stakeholders in Sudan at all levels, as well as to provide technical support to Sudan, including through the use of the Peace Fund and its Crisis Reserve Facility and support to address the humanitarian situation in the country and requests that the budgetary implications, if any, be addressed through re-allocation.

29. The PSC may wish to reaffirm the AU's continued commitment to respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity, and independence of the Republic of Sudan and its solidarity with the people of Sudan in their aspiration for the restoration of constitutional order through a civilian-led government.

30. The PSC may wish to welcome the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and the Egyptian Peacekeeping Operations Training Center (EPOTC) – AU Centre of Excellence – which will support the ongoing efforts of the AU to strengthen the capacity of the AU peace support operations.

31. The PSC may also wish to welcome the fruitful discussions of the meeting with H.E. Ahmed Aboul Gheit Secretary General of the Arab League, and looks forward to continuing the engagement between the two organizations.

H. CONCLUSION

32. The PSC concluded its mission on 4 October 2024 and issued a press release² while commending the Government and People of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Sudan for the warm welcome and support provided to the PSC delegation during its mission.

² <https://papsrepository.africa-union.org/handle/123456789/2177>