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Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council dated 16 December 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/27](#)), provides an update on the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace and security issues in Africa in accordance with the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The report provides an overview of the peace and security landscape across the continent, taking into account key contextual factors which put at risk the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, including the post-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic recovery; climate change; the impact of the military offensive of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on global food, energy and financial systems; and governance challenges. The report also includes an update on the main activities carried out by the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the United Nations system in relation to the partnership with the African Union since the issuance of my previous report ([S/2022/643](#)), including those pertaining to Security Council resolutions [2320 \(2016\)](#), [2378 \(2017\)](#) and [2457 \(2019\)](#) and the statement by the President of the Security Council dated 31 August 2022 ([S/PRST/2022/6](#)). The annex to the present document contains an infographic that provides an overview of the highlights of the partnership with regard to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding during the reporting period.

II. The United Nations and African Union strategic partnership

United Nations Security Council and African Union Peace and Security Council

2. The United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council continued to strengthen their strategic partnership to address peace and security challenges in Africa, with a focus on enhanced coordination and information-sharing with a view to advancing common objectives. In this regard, the three African non-permanent members of the Security Council continued to play a central role, in particular, by ensuring that common African positions on critical issues were given



due consideration in the Security Council. Discussions between the two Councils focused mostly on securing predictable, sustainable and flexible financing for peace support operations led by the African Union, the transition of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism, the increase in global food and energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis, mitigating the effects of climate change, and several country-specific conflict situations.

3. On 13 and 14 October 2022, members of the Security Council hosted the seventh informal joint seminar and 16th annual joint consultative meeting with the Peace and Security Council at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At the joint informal seminar, discussions focused on strengthening cooperation by improving the relevant working methods of both Councils and developing shared goals. Participants welcomed the continued collaboration and renewed their commitment to increased formal and informal interaction. They encouraged further consideration of joint assessment missions and increased working-level consultations between the two Councils, as well as regular participation, when appropriate, of African Union and United Nations representatives in meetings of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council, respectively, in order to share the perspectives of each body on relevant topics. Participants further underscored the importance of early peacebuilding interventions in conflict and post-conflict situations. The deliberations at the joint consultative meeting focused on strengthening African Union and United Nations peace operations in Africa; the situation in West Africa and the Sahel, including countering the threat of terrorism; the situation in the Great Lakes region; and the application of sanctions in conflict situations in Africa. Through a joint communiqué dated 14 October 2022, the members of the two Councils reaffirmed their commitment to continue enhancing close cooperation in the area of peace, security and stability in Africa, and underscored the importance of the implementation of the women and peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas in Africa for the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding. They also emphasized the need to ensure the protection of civilians, including children, and protection against sexual violence in situations of armed conflict.

4. The seminar and the meeting were preceded by preparatory informal 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 from 10 to 12 October. The Committee of Experts also participated in a panel discussion on strengthening the partnership between the two Councils, organized by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union, and was briefed by representatives of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

5. To further strengthen coordination between the two Councils, the President of the Security Council and the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council held four monthly informal meetings, supported by UNOAU, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Peace and Security Council secretariat, during which they exchanged views on the respective programmes of work of the Councils and related matters.

6. Special representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General, as well as their African Union counterparts, continued to brief both Councils on country and regional situations, as well as on thematic issues. In this regard, between September 2022 and August 2023, UNOAU and other United Nations entities provided thematic and country-specific briefings to the Peace and Security Council. The Under-Secretary-

General for Peace Operations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union participated in the ninth African Union High-level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, held in Oran, Algeria, from 7 to 9 December 2022, with the aim of enhancing the readiness of incoming African members of the Security Council to address peace and security issues on the continent.

United Nations Secretariat and African Union Commission

7. On 1 December 2022 in Addis Ababa, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General met for the sixth United Nations-African Union annual conference to review progress in the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The discussions covered the security and development challenges in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions, as well as the challenges associated with political transitions, in particular in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Libya, Mali and the Sudan. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General underscored the importance of strengthening coordination and alignment of the work of the United Nations and the African Union in implementing priority projects for the two agendas.

8. On 2 May 2023, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission convened a high-level dialogue in Addis Ababa to discuss and strategize on enhanced collaboration in the broad areas that underlie the peace and socioeconomic development nexus with the potential to ensure the agency of Africa in driving its transformation in the context of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda. These areas included the following: macroeconomic stability and trade; climate action and energy access; education and innovation; health, humanitarian and social development issues; and governance, peace and security. Participants in the meeting underscored the need for horizontal and vertical integration in delivering on the development priorities of Africa, and ensuring that regional economic communities, African countries, resident coordinators and country teams were seamlessly integrated into the regional development ecosystem.

9. At the technical level, the three African Union-United Nations working groups – on elections, counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism, and African Union-led peace support operations and ad hoc security initiatives – met periodically for coordination, joint analysis, policy development and planning, including with regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2320 \(2016\)](#) and [2378 \(2017\)](#) and considerations related to the financing of African Union peace support operations mandated by the Security Council ([S/2023/303](#)) and the upcoming summit on counter-terrorism to be held in Abuja on the theme of “Strengthening regional cooperation and institution-building to address the evolving threat of terrorism in Africa”.

III. The United Nations and African Union operational partnership

Challenges to and opportunities for peace and security in Africa

10. The primary structural challenges to achieving lasting peace and security in Africa continued to be political and socioeconomic exclusion, including gender inequality; weak governance institutions, including with regard to human rights, the rule of law and electoral democracy; the inadequate delivery of basic services and the

inequitable management of natural resources; terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime; and the effects of climate change and food insecurity. During the reporting period, these challenges were exacerbated by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the military offensive of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Overall, these factors had an adverse impact on sustainable development and economic growth, contributing to high inflation, which affected food and energy prices and increased food and energy insecurity, and shortages of agricultural fertilizers, while simultaneously heightening debt distress and increasing fragility across the continent.

11. In the Sudan, the transition process stalled following the outbreak of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces on 15 April 2023. The ensuing fighting has led to a catastrophic humanitarian situation across the country, which continues to worsen, resulting in thousands of civilians killed and injured, as well as millions more either being internally displaced or seeking refuge outside the country. Numerous short-term ceasefires were frequently violated.

12. In Chad, following the national dialogue organized in the second half of 2022 and the deadly protests of 20 October, the transition process is approaching critical milestones – including a constitutional referendum in November 2023 that will also decide the issue of the form of the State, and the holding of general elections by October 2024 – amidst political and social tensions. The transition in Chad is taking place amid a volatile regional context, in particular, as a result of the conflict in the Sudan, which has intensified intercommunal violence in Darfur, presenting significant risks for Chad.

13. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the security and humanitarian situation in the east of the country remains a major concern, with persistent attacks by armed groups against civilians. More than 3.3 million people have been displaced in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri since March 2022, mostly due to conflict, bringing the total number of people internally displaced in the country to more than 6.3 million, the largest caseload on the continent. This insecurity has continued to fuel a long-standing humanitarian and security crisis and exacerbated regional tensions with neighbouring countries.

14. In West Africa, the challenges of advancing complex political transitions in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali persisted, amidst increasing incidents of violence, perpetrated mostly by terrorists and violent extremist groups, resulting in grave human rights violations and abuses and dire humanitarian situations. On 26 July, a military coup took place in the Niger. The National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (Conseil national pour la sauvegarde de la patrie) seized power, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the government institutions, closed the border and airspace of the country and arbitrarily detained the President, Mohamed Bazoum, along with his family and several government officials, before appointing a new cabinet. On 29 July, the Peace and Security Council issued a statement in which it strongly condemned the military coup and demanded the restoration of constitutional authority within a maximum period of 15 days. On 30 July, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) enacted sanctions, demanding the reinstatement of constitutional order and the immediate release of President Bazoum and threatening the use of force, while actively pursuing diplomatic avenues for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. Meanwhile, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is set to withdraw by 31 December 2023, pursuant to the decision of the Security Council in its resolution [2690 \(2023\)](#), following the request of the host Government. Climate change and desertification continued to present critical challenges, affecting agriculture and the availability of water in particular, and exacerbating food insecurity and farmer-herder intercommunal conflict, as witnessed in central Mali.

15. The situation in the wider Sahel and West Africa is of particular concern, with Al-Qaida-affiliated Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara vying for control in the region, taking advantage of instability, conflict, inadequate State presence and the lack of basic social services. These groups have expanded across large areas of the Sahel and carried out large-scale attacks against civilians and the military, mostly in the Liptako-Gourma area. The southward expansion of terrorist activities towards coastal countries continued, with renewed incursions in Benin and Togo. Meanwhile, Boko Haram and other violent groups continued to represent a threat in the Lake Chad Basin region.

16. The conclusion of the African Union institutional reform process will enable the African Union to better address the many challenges facing the continent, including through an effective partnership with the United Nations. The thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union decided to defer the completion of the process until July 2023. Meanwhile, the process has already yielded positive results, such as the ongoing operationalization of the Peace Fund.

Partnership in conflict prevention and peacemaking

17. Within the prevailing peace and security context, the collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, as well as other partners, in support of conflict prevention and mediation efforts on the continent registered both progress and setbacks.

18. In Ethiopia, the United Nations supported the mediation effort led by the African Union that led to the signing on 2 November 2022 of the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The United Nations also provided technical support to the implementation of that Agreement. In Somalia, the African Union, IGAD, the European Union and the country's bilateral partners continued to engage constructively with Somalia towards the implementation of peacebuilding and State-building priorities.

19. On the Sudan, the Secretary-General has repeatedly called for the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to cease fighting and commit to an immediate cessation of hostilities, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, allow safe passage for civilians fleeing areas of hostilities, facilitate humanitarian operations and respect medical personnel, transport and facilities. He has also called for wider negotiations to achieve a permanent cessation of hostilities and a return to an inclusive and civilian-led political transition. In this regard, the Secretary-General has welcomed high-level international, regional and subregional initiatives aimed at addressing the crisis and is engaging closely with the African Union and IGAD on their efforts to facilitate a long-term resolution of the conflict. The African Union has convened successive meetings under the auspices of its Expanded Mechanism on the Sudan Crisis, with the overarching strategy provided by a "core group" of key Member States and international and regional organizations supported by a secretariat comprising the African Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States and the United Nations. IGAD has also developed a high-level initiative at the level of Heads of State and Government, comprising Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan.

20. In Chad, the United Nations, working with the Office of the African Union High Representative for Chad and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), continued to engage with the transitional authorities to advocate for continued inclusivity in the transition process. The United Nations also continued to work with partners to help the country address broader fragility factors, notably in the context of the spillover of the conflict in the Sudan.

21. In the Sahel, the United Nations and the African Union, together with ECOWAS and the Group of Five for the Sahel, launched a high-level panel to assess the situation in the region and make recommendations on ways to foster international engagement and map out responses to the region's complex challenges. The Independent High-level Panel on Security and Development in the Sahel, led by the former President of the Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, started its activities in September 2022 and has since undertaken thorough consultations with a view to harmonizing existing approaches and synergizing security and development interventions for the subregion. The Panel is expected to share its assessment and related recommendations with the above-mentioned organizations later this year.

22. In the countries undergoing political transition, the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS continued to deepen their collaboration to ensure a swift and timely return to constitutional rule consistent with the deadlines agreed with ECOWAS. From 29 January to 1 February 2023, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel participated in a joint ECOWAS-African Union technical assessment mission to Burkina Faso. In Guinea, the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations continued to engage the transitional authorities and other stakeholders to advance the transition process in the country. In Mali, the United Nations, alongside ECOWAS and the African Union, is part of the two-tier political and technical mechanism mandated to monitor the timetable for political transition and institutional reforms. The United Nations, through MINUSMA and in collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS, provided technical and operational support to the constitutional referendum held on 18 June. The United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS also strongly condemned the military coup in the Niger in July 2023.

23. In Libya, the United Nations-African Union collaboration continued to focus on achieving an inclusive reconciliation process on the basis of the principles of transitional justice and accountability, led by the African Union High-level Committee on Libya and the Presidential Council. In parallel, United Nations-African Union efforts also continued, with the aim of supporting the implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement and advancing political dialogue to facilitate the organization of the presidential and legislative elections.

24. In the Great Lakes region, on 5 May 2023, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General attended the eleventh summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, held in Bujumbura, Burundi. The summit was aimed at providing added impetus to the efforts of regional leaders in the search for durable solutions to regional peace and security challenges. It followed a decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 1140th meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 17 February 2023, in which the Council requested the African Union Commission to coordinate efforts with the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, as well the East African Community and ECCAS, to revitalize the Framework so that it encompassed all peace initiatives for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the Nairobi and the Luanda peace processes.

25. On 27 June 2023, the African Union facilitated a quadripartite summit comprising the East African Community, ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), hosted by Angola in Luanda. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, accompanied by the Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, attended the summit, which adopted a joint framework for the harmonization and coordination of all initiatives in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed at promoting peace, security and stability.

26. The United Nations continued to work with the African Union Commission to advance the women and peace and security agenda, including through mainstreaming the agenda in all responses to conflict. In July 2022, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in partnership with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the African Union, supported a mission of a group of women from the Great Lakes region led by the former President of the Central African Republic, Catherine Samba-Panza, to Kinshasa to advocate for the participation of women in the Nairobi peace talks and their contribution to the promotion of peace in the country.

27. On 12 May 2023, UN-Women and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, through the African Women Leaders Network and in collaboration with IGAD, convened a meeting of leaders in solidarity with women of the Sudan, bringing together more than 150 participants, who called for greater support to the peacebuilding and protection efforts of women in the Sudan. In addition, UNOAU, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, held a hybrid workshop on 13 and 14 October 2022 on the equal participation of women in electoral processes, which was aimed at election management bodies in countries scheduled to organize elections in the final quarter of 2022 and in 2023.

28. Regarding youth engagement, the United Nations, through UNOAU, worked closely with the African Union Commission to advance the youth, peace and security agenda, including by providing support to the launch of the Mission 55 – Conflict in Anaka online application, developed by the German Agency for International Cooperation and the African Union and launched in Addis Ababa on 21 September 2022 to raise awareness among African youth of African Union conflict-resolution tools. Further, the United Nations made efforts to address the rise in hate speech and violent extremism among young people by supporting the African Union "No room for hate speech" campaign's workshop organized by the African Union Commission in Kampala in October 2022. The United Nations continued to support the Special Envoy on Youth of the African Union by facilitating various engagements. The African Union Commission, along with other partners, participated in the launch of the international steering group for the five-year strategic action plan for youth-inclusive peace processes, hosted on 28 February 2023 by the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Search for Common Ground.

29. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism continued to deepen their cooperation through an initiative to support West African Member States in strengthening law enforcement capabilities to protect vulnerable targets through behavioural insights. The Office and the Centre also continued to collaborate in joint capacity-building efforts, including the implementation of youth engagement and empowerment programmes in Mozambique, Nigeria and Somalia and a joint initiative on the protection of vulnerable targets against terrorist attacks for African Member States.

Partnership in peacekeeping and peace support operations

30. The United Nations continued to provide support to the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms and ad hoc security initiatives in their ongoing peace support operations across Africa.

31. In the Lake Chad Basin region, various United Nations entities continued to collaborate with the African Union to support the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, and on the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the

Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region. At a meeting convened by the African Union Commission in December 2022 to discuss progress in the implementation of the Strategy, participants concluded that it had yielded positive results and could serve as a good practice for other conflict-affected areas, such as the Liptako-Gourma region shared by Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

32. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations, through UNOAU working in close coordination with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), continued to monitor and provide expert advice and technical support to the African Union Observer Mission in the Central African Republic until it ceased operations following the decision by the Peace and Security Council of 31 October 2022 after the European Union terminated its funding for the mission on 31 July 2022. The Observer Mission had not become fully operational beyond the deployment of 19 military observers owing to the delayed construction of camps for the joint special security units, the lack of required logistical support for the deployment of the military observers in the sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resumption of hostilities between the Government and armed groups in December 2020.

33. In Mozambique, the counter-insurgency operations spearheaded by the Government, with the support of the SADC Mission in Mozambique and the Rwanda Defence Force, mitigated the further spread of terrorism in the country. The African Union supported the efforts of the SADC Mission in Mozambique. This followed the endorsement of the deployment of the Mission by the Peace and Security Council at its 1062nd meeting, held on 31 January 2022, to serve as a regional response to support Mozambique in combating terrorism and acts of violent extremism, restoring security and law and order in the affected areas of Cabo Delgado Province and providing humanitarian relief to those affected by terrorist activities. Subsequently, and pursuant to appeals from SADC, the African Union donated military and non-military equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in support of the Mission's operations.

34. In Somalia, the United Nations continued to support the ongoing activities of ATMIS and the transfer of security responsibilities to the Somali security forces. In accordance with Security Council resolution [2472 \(2019\)](#) and the communiqué of the 1068th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, ATMIS was requested to optimize its equipment within available resources. To achieve this, a joint United Nations-African Union team conducted an equipment review exercise from 15 September to 5 October 2022, which resulted in the prioritization of equipment by the African Union, including key multipliers and enablers, to be either deployed or repatriated. On 22 March 2023, the United Nations and the African Union jointly held a high-level meeting to raise awareness of the need for financing for ATMIS and resourcing for the Somali security transition. The high-level meeting, co-chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, highlighted the urgent need to ensure provision of the funding required to implement the security transition. The United Nations, jointly with the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union, the European Union and other key security partners, issued a joint technical assessment report against the benchmarks for the security transition in Somalia on 30 April, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2628 \(2022\)](#) and [2670 \(2022\)](#). The United Nations will continue supporting ATMIS in its ongoing reconfiguration efforts, including the deployment of mobile forces with enabling capabilities and troop drawdown, as well as through its planned exit from Somalia by 31 December 2024.

35. In South Sudan, amid continued delays in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan,

intercommunal violence across the country and heightened tensions between the parties, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), IGAD, the African Union Mission in South Sudan and the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission collaborated within the trilateral mechanism, which met periodically to discuss their assessment of electoral and constitution-making needs, and jointly undertook extensive good offices engagements with South Sudanese stakeholders. As a result, a joint task force on constitution-making and electoral processes was launched on 1 June with the revitalized transitional Government to support the implementation of those processes. UNMISS further provided support to the visit of the Peace and Security Council to Juba in February 2023.

36. With regard to the situation in Abyei, the conflict in the Sudan has halted the positive momentum created by encouraging signs of engagement, notably the meeting of the high-level committee of the Sudan and South Sudan on Abyei held on 9 and 10 April in the presence of the African Union, the United Nations and IGAD, at which the overall situation in the area was discussed, with the aim of advancing the process with regard to final status.

37. The African Union also made progress towards the reconceptualization of the African Standby Force by reviewing the existing concept and aligning it with the evolving peace and security landscape on the continent. The United Nations, through UNOAU, continued to support the strengthening of the Force by working closely with the African Union and regional economic communities and regional mechanisms to develop policies, guidelines and standard operating procedures, build the needed civilian, military and police capabilities, including standby rosters, and implement the decisions of the 14th meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security on strengthening the African Standby Force, including operationalizing the Continental Logistics Base and the Continental Movements Control Centre.

38. The Department of Operational Support, in collaboration with UNOAU, continued to work with the African Union to strengthen cooperation and deepen mutual understanding on operational support matters through the knowledge and expertise exchange programme. Following the endorsement of a joint African Union-United Nations road map in October 2022 that charts the future direction of the programme and learning activities, the collaboration has already resulted in the secondment of United Nations staff to support the operationalization of the Peace Fund secretariat. The cooperation further resulted in a joint business partnering course for public finance practitioners to enhance expertise in resource stewardship practices; the hosting of an African Union participant in the United Nations Enhanced Training for High-level Operational Support programme; the development of a writing manual for drafters within the Peace Support Operations Division of the African Union; and planning for an organizational governance programme tailored to the African Union. As part of exploratory efforts to assess whether the Department's triangular partnership programme training model could benefit the peace efforts of the African Union, the Department hosted two medical representatives from the African Union to observe the programme's course for Field Medical Assistants in July 2023. The United Nations, through UNOAU, also continued to support the African Union in the development of its security management system. In this context, UNOAU supported the African Union in developing a draft safety and security service policy for civilian personnel in African Union peace operations and field offices.

Partnership in peacebuilding and the rule of law

39. The United Nations continued to work closely with the African Union in the areas of peacebuilding and the rule of law.

40. On 28 November 2022, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peace and Security Council held their 5th annual informal consultative meeting, focused on climate and peacebuilding. Member States called for proactive and effective measures to avert the effects of climate change on peace and security and stressed the importance of official and accurate data to guide responses to climate threats. They further called for strong regional, national and local leadership of climate-related initiatives to increase ownership, and emphasized the importance of strengthening institutions, building community capacity in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and increasing coordination with international partners for successful initiatives. They committed to regular dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peace and Security Council to coordinate common approaches to peacebuilding efforts in Africa.

41. The United Nations, through UNOAU, provided technical support and advice to African Union initiatives related to security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; and mine action.

42. With respect to security sector reform, the United Nations worked with the African Union to strengthen the implementation of its security sector reform policy framework by drawing lessons learned from the past 10 years of activities. In addition, UNOAU participated in consultations with national security sector reform commissions and coordination bodies and provided inputs to the draft training curriculum package on gender mainstreaming and security sector reform.

43. On disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the United Nations participated in various consultations with the African Union and the World Bank to discuss the African Union disarmament, demobilization and reintegration capacity project. Initiated in 2013, the project is aimed at creating sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration capacities within the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, and African Member States to support national and regional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives. The fourth phase of the project has been developed, with a focus on operational disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support to the African Union. Furthermore, UNOAU participated in the fourth African Union Regions Standing Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, at which future efforts of the African Union and regional economic communities to support member States were discussed.

44. The United Nations continued to provide technical support towards the development of the African Union strategies on countering improvised explosive devices and on mine action, which are aimed at enhancing coordinated action on the continent. The United Nations also continued to support the African Union in the implementation of strategies intended to reduce the threats of explosives across Africa caused by conventional weapons, mines, explosive remnants of war, cluster munitions and improvised explosive devices, in accordance with international conventions on explosive hazards and the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative of the African Union.

45. In support of the implementation of the Africa Amnesty Month for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons, within the context of the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, the Office for Disarmament Affairs supported national campaigns in Liberia, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania. Between August and December 2022, the three countries organized awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers and risks of illegal gun ownership and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, and collected and publicly destroyed weapons voluntarily surrendered by civilians. On 16 and 17 May 2023, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs travelled to Addis Ababa to review and assess with the African Union how to advance arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament on the continent.

IV. Support to African Union peace support operations

46. There has been progress towards ensuring predictable, sustainable and flexible resourcing for peace support operations led by the African Union, including through the Peace Fund. Pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 31 August 2022 (S/PRST/2022/6), the Secretary-General submitted a report on 1 May 2023 (S/2023/303) which resulted from extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including the African Union Commission and members of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council. In his report, the Secretary-General notes the changing nature of conflict in Africa and provides an update on progress made by the United Nations and the African Union in fulfilling the commitments made in Security Council resolutions 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017), with recommendations on next steps. He recommends that the Security Council lay the foundation for a new generation of African Union-led, United Nations-supported peace operations on the African continent, consistent with the increasing focus on peace enforcement, with predictable and sustainable financing, including through United Nations assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis.

47. During the thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, a consensus paper on predictable, adequate and sustainable financing for African Union peace and security activities was adopted.

48. The Peace Fund continued to make significant progress, with the Fund expected to reach the \$400 million target by the end of 2023, and a director of the secretariat to be appointed. In May 2023, the Peace and Security Council approved an increase in the crisis reserve facility for 2023 and 2024 from \$5 million to \$10 million, and the allocation of \$2 million each to ATMIS and the East African Community regional force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union continued to participate in meetings of the Peace Fund Board of Trustees as an ex officio member.

49. The United Nations continued to support the African Union in enhancing its capacity to ensure that its peace support operations are continuously planned and conducted in compliance with international human rights law, international humanitarian law and applicable standards of conduct and discipline. Significant progress was made through the African Union compliance and accountability framework project, supported by the European Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which led to the adoption of key policy documents, including the policy on the selection and screening of personnel, the policy on the protection of civilians, and the compliance strategic framework.

50. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, in close collaboration with UNOAU, continued to provide support for mainstreaming child protection issues within the African Union peace and security agenda. The United Nations, the African Union and other partners in the African Union coordination group on children in situations of conflict engaged to coordinate strategic planning and information-sharing, including for the purpose of early warning and prevention.

51. In November 2022, the African Union Commission conducted an inaugural lessons learned forum on peace support operations deployed over the past two decades, aimed at guiding the reconceptualization of the African Standby Force. Attendees of the forum assessed how the African Union had implemented past peace support operations and the various ways in which the Force had been utilized since its establishment, while identifying key lessons learned that could contribute towards its full operationalization and utilization. As part of the efforts to ensure closer collaboration with regional economic communities and regional mechanisms,

participants in the 15th meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security, held in May 2023, subsequently requested the Commission to conduct a strategic review of the Force with the participation of regional economic communities, regional mechanisms and States members of the African Union.

V. Partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements

Regional economic communities and regional mechanisms

52. Collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, leveraging the relative advantages of each organization, remains critical to comprehensively respond to challenges to peace and security and make progress on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

53. In the Great Lakes region, the engagements by the East African Community, ECCAS, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, SADC and the African Union, in coordination with the United Nations and with the support of partners, have been critical to renewing momentum for the strengthening of joint action towards addressing peace and security challenges, elaborating an action plan for the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, and ensuring greater attention to enhanced coordination in the implementation of the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

54. The trilateral mechanism on the Sudan, comprising the United Nations, the African Union and IGAD, in collaboration with international partners, continuously engaged with Sudanese stakeholders in an effort to ensure that the transition process remained on track. While prospects for an inclusive and civilian-led political transition were jeopardized by the outbreak of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, the three organizations continued to collaborate on securing a cessation of hostilities, including through the Expanded Mechanism on the Sudan Crisis and its core group led by the African Union, as well as the IGAD road map.

Other regional organizations and arrangements

55. On 30 November and 1 December 2022 in Port Louis, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Indian Ocean Commission held a regional workshop on conflict prevention and mediation in the Indian Ocean region. Participants were drawn from member States of the Commission and represented ministries of foreign affairs, security, gender and justice, academic institutions, offices of the ombudsperson, civil society and faith-based organizations. The African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the International Organization of la Francophonie and SADC were also represented, and shared their mediation experiences and lessons learned, which contributed to a set of actionable recommendations to strengthen conflict prevention in the Indian Ocean region.

VI. Other activities of the United Nations Office to the African Union

56. UNOAU continued to support the strengthening of the United Nations-African Union strategic partnership, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of UNOAU. The Office maintained strong and enduring relationships with the African Union, underpinned by daily

interaction with key stakeholders, including the Peace and Security Council, the African Union Commission and partners, thereby facilitating a coherent, well-informed and strategic United Nations approach to advancing the partnership.

57. On 22 November 2022, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union attended the summit of Heads of State and Government of the Accra Initiative, at which deliberations focused on preventing the spillover of terrorism from the Sahel and addressing transnational organized crime and violent extremism in the border areas of the Initiative's member countries. The Special Representative also attended the twenty-third Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States, held in Libreville on 1 July 2023, as well as meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. These events provided opportunities to enhance a common understanding of peace and security situations on the continent, and further strengthen the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

58. The Special Representative attended the first African Union policy conference on promoting the peace, security and development nexus, held in Tangier, Morocco, from 25 to 27 October 2022. The Special Representative also participated in the thirteenth high-level retreat of African Union Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, held in Windhoek from 21 to 23 October under the theme "Transformative mediation for Africa's effective governance and peace dividends".

59. From 17 to 20 October 2022, UNOAU jointly organized with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the East African Community a lessons learned workshop in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, on the role of subregional organizations in mediation processes, during which over 80 participants from the East African Community, the African Union and other regional organizations shared best practices and experiences with a view to strengthening the mediation capacity of the East African Community.

60. The Special Representative also held numerous bilateral meetings and attended events with Permanent Representatives to the African Union, including members of the Peace and Security Council, as well as officials of the African Union Commission and other representatives. UNOAU held an interactive meeting with the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and his staff on 15 May as part of its annual retreat, providing an opportunity for the Commissioner to share the Commission's perspectives and priority areas of focus for the United Nations-African Union partnership in peace and security, which enabled UNOAU to further align its priorities and workplans accordingly.

61. UNOAU undertook several initiatives to accelerate the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), working closely with the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security. UNOAU provided support for the deployment from 3 to 16 August 2022 of members of the African Women Leaders Network, the Panel of the Wise and the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation to Kenya to monitor the elections in that country. The support enabled the establishment of a "women's situation room", which monitored the political participation of women and was ready to provide mediation services in the event of election-related tensions or violence. On 29 September, UNOAU, with support from the Government of Ireland, organized a workshop on advancing partnerships and the community of practice for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda to enhance collaboration and information-sharing among various stakeholders, including the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, and civil society

organizations. On 14 and 15 December, UNOAU and partners provided support to the African Union in organizing the third annual Women, Peace and Security Forum under the theme of leveraging monitoring to enhance women's participation and leadership in peace processes in Africa. An expert from the United Nations Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisers moderated key discussions attended by over 80 participants. The forum reviewed progress and discussed practical strategies in advancing the women and peace and security agenda in Africa.

62. Under the "She Stands for Peace" initiative, with support from the Government of Norway, the third season of the podcast series, featuring 15 episodes, highlighted the insights and experiences of various eminent personalities in advancing the women and peace and security agenda.

63. The Secretariat and the African Union Commission maintained technical-level contact throughout the reporting period on regional, country-specific and thematic files, including through the technical working groups on elections, counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, and peace support operations and ad hoc security initiatives. Technical teams of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations, UNOAU, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, MINUSCA and the African Union Commission held a horizon-scanning and conflict-prevention meeting on 27 April, during which participants agreed on strengthening inter-agency coordination in addressing political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian issues in the central African subregion.

64. With a view to coordinating United Nations efforts in support of regional and subregional organizations, the Special Representative participated in the 37th high-level meeting of heads of United Nations peace missions in West Africa, held in Bamako on 27 and 28 October 2022. During the meeting, participants agreed to continue to strengthen cooperation on governance within the United Nations, on the one hand, and with the African Union, regional and subregional organizations, on the other, to harness their respective comparative advantages, with a view to improving the ownership and implementation of existing African instruments on governance.

VII. Observations and recommendations

65. Strong partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations are essential to effective multilateralism. In this context, the United Nations-African Union partnership has continued to grow in scope and depth.

66. However, the complex nature of contemporary conflicts in Africa, compounded by factors such as climate change, food and energy insecurity and a range of external threats and shocks, underscores the fact that traditional responses are ineffective. There is an alarming rise in political contestation turning violent or fuelling intra-State conflicts, as well as in acts of terrorism and violent extremism, which exposes systemic governance deficits associated with weak or absent State institutions. These challenges call for renewed efforts to make our collective security more effective, in line with my policy brief entitled "A New Agenda for Peace" of July 2023, with an increased emphasis on global and regional prevention efforts, boosting preventive diplomacy and supporting regional peace support operations. In doing so, women and youth must always be at the core of these efforts.

67. Continued global polarization has the potential to destabilize regions that are relatively peaceful. If Africa is to have a real opportunity to unleash its immense untapped potential, strengthened multilateralism and international solidarity and cooperation are crucial. Financial institutions must be reformed to promote greater equity and representation, as well as to ensure that they are fit for purpose in

addressing contemporary challenges, such as increasing poverty and inequality, widening digital divides, rising indebtedness, climate change and State fragility. Such reforms can contribute towards the attainment of Agenda 2063, its flagship initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

68. The role of regional organizations in addressing contemporary threats across the conflict cycle, including through peace enforcement missions, will also be critical going forward, underpinned by the availability of the requisite human and financial resources. Our responses must be commensurate to the formidable challenges we face. I therefore look forward to the continued commitment of the Security Council to addressing the issue of predictable, sustainable and flexible financing of African Union-led peace support operations, including through assessed contributions, by adopting a framework resolution in the coming months.

69. Following the military coup in the Niger on 26 July, I remain deeply troubled by the continuing epidemic of coups d'état on the continent, which undermine peace and stability, the rule of law and democratic governance, as well as the principles outlined in the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

70. I am appalled by the devastating conflict in the Sudan and the resulting catastrophic humanitarian situation. I once again call on the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to cease fighting and commit to a durable cessation of hostilities, to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and allow unfettered humanitarian access. The United Nations will continue to engage with the African Union and other international partners on the coordination of regional and subregional efforts towards finding a resolution to the conflict.

71. I am also deeply concerned about the security and humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I commend the ongoing initiatives aimed at de-escalation and the efforts aimed at the harmonization of initiatives, including through the quadripartite framework facilitated by the African Union. At a time when the country is also planning for elections in December 2023, it is important that the violence end, and that the Congolese people freely exercise their civic rights.

72. Despite the setbacks, I welcome the positive developments, in particular, the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement in Ethiopia in November 2022, and urge its full implementation. I commend African leaders and citizens who are leading by example in building a more inclusive, democratic and prosperous continent.

73. I would like to thank the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, for his continued leadership and strong commitment to the enhanced partnership between our two organizations. I also express my appreciation to the organs of the African Union, African Member States and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms for their indispensable efforts towards addressing challenges to peace, security and development in Africa. I also commend the African Union on progress made so far in its institutional reform process.

74. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative to the African Union, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, as well as the staff of UNOAU and all United Nations and African Union entities, for their important role in continuing to foster a strong partnership between the two organizations.

Annex

UNITED NATIONS - AFRICAN UNION PARTNERSHIP IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MEDIATION, PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING

August 2022 - July 2023




POLICY DIALOGUE

-  1 Annual Joint Consultative Meetings between the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council
-  4 informal coordination meetings between the incoming President of the Security Council and the Chairperson of the AUPSC, facilitated by the AU and the UN
-  1 consultative meeting between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission
-  30 UN briefings to the AU Peace and Security Council
-  1 UN-AU Annual Conference between the Secretary-General and the AUC Chairperson
-  3 active UN-AU technical-level working groups on elections; AU peace support operations; and terrorism and prevention of violent extremism
-  Monthly briefings to African members of the Security Council by the UN and the AU in New York
-  Consultations during lead-up to the publication of the latest report of the Secretary-General on predictable financing of AU-led peace support operations (S/2023/303)



CHAD

The UN, ECCAS and the AU continued to engage with transitional authorities and other key national stakeholders to promote an inclusive transition and a peaceful return to constitutional order.

LIBYA

The UN supported the AU's lead on Libya's national reconciliation process.

SUDAN

The UN, the AU and IGAD worked jointly in a trilateral mechanism format to facilitate the political process for a democratic transition. Since the onset of the conflict in April 2023, the UN and AU, along with other international partners, engaged in efforts to bring the fighting to an end under the umbrella of the AU-led Expanded Mechanism.

ETHIOPIA

The UN provided full support to AU-led mediation efforts, which culminated in the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement on 2 November 2022.

SOMALIA

The AU and the UN raised awareness of Member States on the resourcing needs of ATMIS and the Somalia security transition. The UN, in coordination with the AU, IGAD, the EU and other partners, engaged with Somalia towards the implementation of state-building priorities.

SOUTH SUDAN

The UN, IGAD and the AU jointly undertook good offices engagements with the South Sudanese stakeholders leading to the establishment of the joint task force with the transitional Government on constitution-making and electoral processes.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The AU, the UN and sub-regional organizations worked towards the revitalization of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, and supported efforts to harmonize and coordinate regional peace initiatives for the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The UN provided technical support to the AU Military Observer Mission until the latter seized operations, as per the AUPSC decision of 31 October 2022.

BURKINA FASO AND GUINEA

ECOWAS, the AU and the UN continued to engage the transitional authorities and other stakeholders to advance the transition process.

NIGER

ECOWAS, the AU and the UN condemned the military coup of July 2023.

GAMBIA

The UN worked closely with the AU and ECOWAS to support the Government in advancing security sector reform and strengthening security sector governance.

MALI

The UN provided technical and operational support to the constitutional referendum held on 18 June. ECOWAS, the AU and the UN continued to advance the political transition through the mechanism mandated to monitor the political transition and institutional reforms timetable.

COMMITMENTS

-  The Independent High-level Panel on Security and Development in the Sahel, commissioned by the UN, the AU, ECOWAS and G5-Sahel, launched its activities in September 2022.
-  The UN and the AU undertook joint activities on women's equal participation in electoral processes, youth-inclusive peace processes, and the protection of vulnerable targets against terrorist attacks.
-  As part of the AU's Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, UN supported national campaigns for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons in Liberia, Tanzania and Togo.
-  The UN provided technical assistance to the AU on operational support in the context of the Knowledge and Expertise Exchange Programme.
-  The UN supported the AU Peace Fund secretariat through seconded staff.
-  The UN provided technical assistance to the AU peace support operations on human rights compliance and conduct and discipline processes, leading to the adoption of key AU policy documents.
-  The UN supported the AU on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; security sector reform; and training development and delivery for the African Standby Force capabilities.

"Despite the setbacks, I welcome the positive developments, in particular the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Ethiopia in November 2022, and urge its full implementation. I commend African leaders and citizens who are leading by example in building a more inclusive, democratic and prosperous continent."

Secretary-General António Guterres



**PREVENTING CONFLICT
KEEPING THE PEACE
SUSTAINING PEACE**

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. For more information, visit dppa.un.org, peacekeeping.un.org and unvsa.unmissions.org