



17th UN-AU Joint Task Force **Joint Communiqué**



The United Nations (UN) – African Union (AU) Joint Task Force on Peace and Security held its seventeenth consultative meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 September 2019.

The AU Commission was represented by Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Minata Samaté-Cessouma, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs and Ambassador Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations. The UN Secretariat was represented by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Ms. Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa. They were accompanied by other senior officials from the two Organizations, including senior advisors from the Bureau of the Chairperson and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

The Joint Task Force reviewed the state of the partnership between the AU and UN. The meeting welcomed the considerable progress achieved in the AU-UN Partnership, including the holding of the Third African Union-United Nations Annual Conference in New York on 6 May 2019, as well as the 12th UN-AU Consultative Meeting on the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflict (Desk-to-Desk) held in Addis Ababa on 11-12 March 2019. The meeting had a *tour d'horizon* of the peace and security situations and challenges on the African continent and discussed Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Mali and the Sahel region, including the security situation in Burkina Faso, Somalia, Sudan and Western Sahara. They also exchanged views on the upcoming electoral processes in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Guinea.

In the review of the state of implementation of the AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership on Peace and Security, the Joint Task Force welcomed the cooperation between the two organizations in countries in/or emerging from conflict in Africa as models of cooperation which offer useful experiences and lessons to inform future joint endeavours in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and crises. The Joint Task Force welcomed United Nations' support to the flagship project of the AU Agenda 2063 on Silencing the Guns in Africa, which indeed is the AU theme for 2020. The Joint Task Force also underscored its commitment to enable women's full, equal and meaningful participation in electoral and peace processes to ensure sustainable political solutions, prevent conflict-related sexual violence and promote gender equality more broadly. The imperative for youth participation in electoral and peace processes was also underscored.

The Joint Task Force expressed concern over the impact of climate change, as manifested in the increase in inter-communal tensions and clashes in the Sahel and the other parts of the continent. The meeting stressed the need to develop joint regional approaches to climate security, especially for the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and other affected areas. The meeting commended the

cooperation in support of AU peace support operations, and recognized AU efforts towards ensuring the deployment of the African Standby Force, including in providing responses in disaster situations. The Joint Task Force agreed to enhance joint work in technical areas, in particular mission planning and management, human rights compliance framework and financial management and accountability for peace operations. The Joint Task Force noted the progress in UN-AU staff exchange to facilitate knowledge transfer and interoperability on operational support matters.

The Joint Task Force reaffirmed the importance to further intensify efforts to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. It was further announced that Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the AU Commissioner Smaïl Chergui and EU Director for Africa Koen Vervaeke will jointly visit CAR on 5-7 October 2019. The objective of the joint visit will be to add momentum in the implementation of the peace agreement, notably the immediate deployment of the USMS (*Unités Spéciales Mixtes de Sécurité*) and follow up on their last joint visit in April 2019. The meeting welcomed the recent reactivation of the CAR-Congo and CAR-Cameroon bilateral commissions, which will help address border security and transhumance issues; and underscored the importance of similar collaboration with other neighbouring countries.

On Cameroon, the Joint Task Force welcomed the address to the nation by H.E. Paul Biya, President of Cameroon on 10 September 2019, during which he called for a National Dialogue inviting all stakeholders to discuss on the challenges facing the country currently specifically on the North and South West regions and stressed the importance for this dialogue to be inclusive and to address comprehensively all the challenges facing the country.

With regard to Sudan, the Joint Task Force welcomed the signing of the agreement on transitional civilian authority and the appointment of the new Prime Minister, H.E. Abdallah Hamdok. The Joint Task Force applauded the role of the African Union and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in facilitating this achievement. They recognized the role of the international community in accompanying the country through the process, while reiterating their continued commitment to accompany Sudan in its journey towards sustainable peace and socio-economic recovery. In this regard, the meeting emphasized the importance of fully bringing on board the armed movements from Darfur and the Two areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in order to have an inclusive peace process. The meeting further underscored the need for the total lifting of the economic sanctions and removal of Sudan from the list of States sponsors of terrorism in order to facilitate the mobilization of the much-needed international economic assistance to the country. In this context, the meeting also highlighted the necessity of the early convening of a donors' conference to mobilize resources for Sudan socio-economic recovery.

On Libya, the Joint Task Force expressed deep concern at the precarious security and humanitarian situation on the ground, characterized by continued fighting among the armed factions as well as the persistent illegal supply of arms, ammunitions and related technologies to the factions. In this regard, the meeting called for reinforcement of the implementation of the UN arms embargo on Libya. The meeting also emphasized the resumption of political dialogue, the urgent need for a permanent ceasefire being put in place, the convening of an international conference and more critically, a meeting of the various Libyan actors in order to pave a

consensual way forward. The meeting reiterated the importance of UN-AU coordination, information sharing and joint analysis to support the peace process in close consultations with Libyan actors. The AU delegation reiterated the decision of the AU High Level Committee on Libya held on 7 July in Niamey, and proposed the appointment of a Joint UN/AU Envoy for Libya.

The Joint Task Force expressed grave concern on the spread and continued impact of terrorism and insecurity in the Sahel region into neighbouring countries in West Africa, noting that this could reverse the significant human and economic development, as well as democratic gains, achieved thus far in the region. In this regard, both organizations committed to supporting regionally-owned and driven initiatives to combat and curb the threat and spread of violent extremism and organised crime. This includes mobilizing resources to support initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security and economic development such as the G5 Priority Investment Programme and the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for the areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin.

On the situation in Mali and the Sahel, the Joint Task Force took note of the preparations for the national political dialogue to discuss key challenges facing the country. The Joint Task Force urged all Malian stakeholders to sustain the spirit of compromise and collaboration and overcome obstacles to the full implementation of the 2015 peace agreement to complete the constitutional review process. The Joint Task Force once again expressed concern over the deteriorating security situation in the central areas of Mali. It welcomed the Government's recent efforts to address the situation, with the support of its partners. The Joint Task Force noted the need for all international partners to continue to support MINUSMA. Regarding the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Joint Task Force called on international partners to scale up their support and provide the resources and assistance required by this Force to fully play its critical role in fighting terrorism and transnational organized crime. In the same vein, the Joint Task Force commended the significant political and financial commitment made by ECOWAS during its recent Summit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and expressed its readiness to partner with ECOWAS in the implementation of its recent decisions on the situation in the Sahel. With respect to Burkina Faso, both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to sustain their support to the national authorities in responding to the unfolding security and humanitarian crisis. The Joint Task Force welcomed the convening of the PBC High-Level Meeting on Burkina Faso on the margins of the 74th Session of the UNGA as part of broader efforts to mobilize the attention and the assistance of the international community to the country.

On Somalia, the Joint Task Force underscored the need for the resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government and Federal Member States towards achieving necessary milestones in the roadmap towards the elections in 2020/21. The meeting stressed the need for continued improvement in relations between the FGS and the FMS. The Joint Task Force welcomed the ongoing operations by Somali security forces supported by AMISOM in Lower Shabelle, enabled through the logistical support provided by UNSOS. The meeting also called on international partners to continue providing coordinated support to capacity-building in the Somali security and rule of law sectors to extend governance and state authority to recovered area. The implementation of quick impact projects was emphasized as part of the early recovery process. The Joint Task Force also discussed the regional situation and its impact on Somalia and called

for a common approach among Somalia's neighbours and the wider international community towards support to Somalia's peace, security and state building processes.

With regard to Western Sahara, the Joint Task Force looked forward to the early appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and encouraged the parties to participate constructively and without preconditions in the political process.

The Joint Task Force had an overview of the socio-political situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Guinea ahead of their elections in 2020. With respect to Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea, they noted the need to continue consolidating peace and stability. The Joint Task Force highlighted the tense socio-political situations in these countries, due in part to institutional reform processes. The meeting stressed the need for the UN and the AU, in cooperation with ECOWAS, to encourage Ivorian and Guinean stakeholders to prioritize dialogue with a view to fostering national cohesion and for inclusive political and electoral processes and consolidate peace and stability in these countries. They agreed to further increase UN-AU cooperation to support the two countries in achieving these important objectives. The Joint Task Force urged the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to ensure promotion and protection of human rights. They also called on all stakeholders to refrain from any statement and acts that would jeopardize national and regional stability. The Joint Task Force also explored prospects for cooperation in support of the Government of Ethiopia as it continues to pursue governance reforms and prepares for general elections in 2020. The two Organizations committed, working with the IGAD, to assist in fostering national cohesion and inclusive political and electoral processes.

Regarding the evolving situation in South Sudan, the Joint Task Force commended the current efforts to fully implement the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. It further welcomed the contribution of the AU to the peace process, through UN support, to the implementation of the security arrangement protocol. The meeting underscored the need to ensure that the current pre-interim period is not further extended and thus called for the establishment of the interim government on 12 November 2019.

The Joint Task Force expressed concern over the post-electoral tensions in Malawi and agreed, working with SADC, to support national efforts to mitigate post-electoral tensions and promote peaceful outcome of the process.

The next statutory meeting of the Joint Task Force will take place in Addis Ababa in February 2020, on the margins of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union.