



Issue No 1 January - March 2024



# Governance, Peace & Security

*Newsletter*

## Advancing the Peace and Security Agenda in the COMESA Region:

### GPS 2024 Q1 highlights

At the core of our mission lies the foundation for promoting good governance, peace, security, and stability in the COMESA region. Anchored in Article 3d of the COMESA Treaty, the Governance Peace and Security Unit is dedicated to promoting these principles and fostering cooperation among Member States. During the first quarter through the fourth African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA IV) EU APSA IV EU Support Programme, the Governance Peace and Security Unit has been actively engaged in numerous initiatives, all aimed at advancing our mandate and achieving the objectives as highlighted in the APSA IV work plan. From strategic collaborations to targeted interventions, GPS's efforts have been firm in supporting Member States, working closely with civil society organizations, international organizations and promoting youth peace and security agenda.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Validation of the Northern Africa Cluster Report on the Nexus Between Climate Change, Peace, and Security      | 2 |
| Briefing with the COMESA Committee of Elders   | 3 |
| COMESA – SADC Exchange Visit   | 4 |
| Dissemination of the COMESA Handbook on the Mediation of Natural Resource-Based Conflicts in Karamoja, Uganda. | 5 |
| Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on the Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment for Burundi           | 6 |
| Training of Targeted Local Communities from Somalia and Zambia on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism  | 7 |
| Validation of Strategy, Guidelines and Procedures on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)                | 8 |
| "Silencing The Guns" Initiative Regional Capacity Building a Success   | 9 |



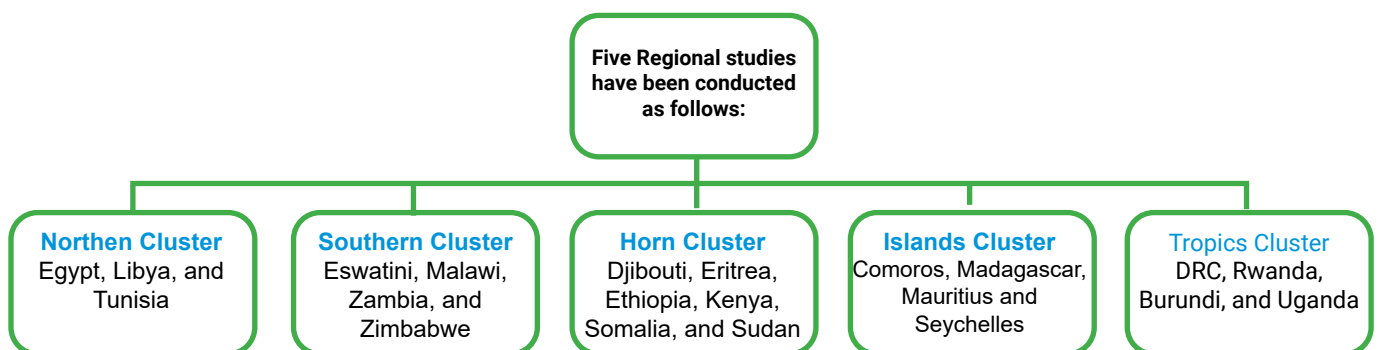
## Activity 1: Validation of the Northern Africa Cluster Report on the Nexus Between Climate Change, Peace, and Security

### Thematic Area: Climate Change Peace and Security

COMESA conducted five regional-specific studies on the nexus between climate change, peace, and security in 2023. These cluster studies were conducted in line with the recommendations of the 2021 mapping study which identified the necessity of conducting context-specific cluster studies

of the COMESA region on the nexus between climate change, peace, and security to gain a nuanced understanding of the relationships, dynamics, and impacts on societies at large, including women, youth, children, refugees, and persons with disabilities.

January 2024



a. The final validation that focused on the North Africa cluster was held on 30th – 31st January 2024 in Mombasa, Kenya. The purpose of these validations was to review the study findings with regional subject area experts to

get their input and enrich the study reports with recommendations that will guide COMESA on programming to mitigate the impact of climate change on peace and security.



## Activity 2: Briefing with the COMESA Committee of Elders

### Thematic Area: Strategic Planning/ Peace and Security Reports

On the 8th of February, the GPS unit held a virtual meeting with the COMESA Committee of Elders (CCOE) on Peace and Security in the region. The meeting was convened to brief the COMESA Committee of Elders members on the region's evolving peace and security situation. In particular, it highlighted the prevailing conflict situations that have continued to impact the stability of some selected Member States. The issues discussed included the threat of terrorism, the

negative forces in the region and climate change and its impacts. The meeting acknowledged the impacts and challenges posed by these security threats and called for collective action to address the highlighted threats. As the region navigates through multifaceted challenges, the call for collaboration and strategic foresight made during the virtual meeting stands as a beacon of hope for fostering enduring peace and security in the region.

February 2024



*Briefing session of the COMESA Committee of Elders led by Assistant Secretary General - Programmes Dr Mohamed Kadah (left) with staff of the GPS Unit*



SADC delegation comprising of Charles Zanza (3rd left) and Thambose Banda (4th right) received by COMESA GPS Unit staff, Conflict Early Warning Expert Raymond Kitevu (2nd left) and other Unit staff during the visit to the COMESA Secretariat Headquarters

## Activity 3: COMESA – SADC Exchange Visit

### Thematic Area: Partnership/Collaboration

As part of the efforts to strengthen collaboration and partnership between the RECs and other partners, the GPS Unit held a two-day exchange visit with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) - Regional Early Warning Center (REWC) on Early Warning Collaboration. The meeting was convened at the COMESA Secretariat from 14th – 15th February 2024.

As a result of the exchange visit, COMESA and SADC agreed to:

a. Continue with the development of joint situational analysis reports on thematic issues for countries facing security challenges or prior to the deployment of election observation mission for shared Member States heading for elections.

b. Collaborate on the implementation of programs and activities covering climate change, peace and security.

c. COMESA to implement Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) initiatives in collaboration with SADC and this can start with invitations by each REC when implementing PCRD activities.

d. Work towards joint deployment of COMESA Elders and SADC Panel of Elders to resolve contentious issues in the region as necessary

e. Link COMESA GPS with selected SADC units that deal with matters of youth and peace and security, the SADC Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.



Participants for the dissemination workshop of the COMESA handbook on the mediation of natural resource-based conflicts

## Activity 4: Dissemination of the COMESA Handbook on the Mediation of Natural Resource-Based Conflicts in Karamoja, Uganda.

### Thematic Area: Conflict Prevention

To build the capacities, knowledge, and skills of stakeholders towards addressing climate change-related conflicts, COMESA disseminated its Handbook on the Mediation of Resource-based Conflicts for the Karamoja cluster on 20th – 23rd February 2024 in Soroti City, Uganda. Karamoja region in Uganda is a semi-arid region inhabited by pastoralist communities, this region is prone to conflicts due to competition over water, land, pasture and other natural resources including minerals.

The training brought together communities that have experienced climate change-induced

natural resource conflicts from all the districts of the Karamoja region namely Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Amudat, Napak, Nabilatuk, Abim, and Karenga. The workshop focused on providing stakeholders with the necessary approaches and tools relevant to addressing conflicts related to natural resources including water, pasture, and land within the Cluster.

The key outcome of the workshop was the establishment of a pool of 38 trainers which included 14 females and 24 males. The Trainers are charged with applying the knowledge learned and cascading the training at the grassroots level.



'I wish to thank the Center for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) and COMESA team for the training I received from Soroti on mediation on sharing natural resources. The skills have so far helped me in mediating in settling two land disputes between the Nakabi people and Karukadong people are now sharing the land with the Jimos people without violence and the Kamor people have surrendered the land to the Nakaal people without the use of violence this was between February and March 2024.'

- **John Bosco Akore Ogira** -Cordinator Karamoja Peace and Environmental Protection Service (Kapeps) Ministry / Secretary Kotido District Cultural Elders Council



## Activity 5: Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on the Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment for Burundi

Thematic Area: Early Warning

March 2024

To enhance conflict prevention and structural resilience in the region, a National Multi-Sectoral Consultation on the COMESA Early Warning (COMWARN) System's Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) Methodology was held in Bujumbura, Burundi from 4th - 8th March 2024. During the consultation, the Burundi SVA forecasted CPPI drivers for 2025 were discussed and shared with the stakeholders. The consultation was held in line with the Decision of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs that was held in Lusaka, Zambia on the 6th of June 2023 which "called on Member States to take advantage of the COMWARN model to

build resilience starting with hosting national consultations as directed by previous policy organs"; Burundi is the 9th Member State in the COMESA region that has held the national multi-stakeholder consultations. Other countries include Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia, Seychelles and Zimbabwe.

The COMWARN SVAs are important in helping Member States identify their structural vulnerabilities and develop response strategies early enough to address the vulnerabilities. The utilization of the COMWARN SVA methodology is expected to foster the creation of a resilient region.



...COMWARN SVAs are important in helping Member States identify their structural vulnerabilities...



## Activity 6: Training of Targeted Local Communities from Somalia and Zambia on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Thematic Area: Prevention And Countering Violent Extremism

In collaboration with the National Anti-Terrorism Centre of Zambia and partners including Save the Children, Horn of Africa Youth Network, and Agents of Peace, COMESA organized a training aimed at strengthening the capacities of local communities from Somalia and Zambia in preventing and countering violent extremism. The comprehensive 4-day training brought together 40 participants, comprising 23 male and 17 female representatives from diverse sectors including women-led and focused Community Based Organizations

(CBOs), Youth-led and focused CBOs, Local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) specializing in governance, peace, and security, local CSOs in child protection, local youth leaders, religious leaders, and security agents (local police). A key outcome of this intensive four days program was the development of an action plan that highlights short-term and long-term activities to be undertaken by the communities from both Zambia and Somalia communities as a measure of fostering sustainable efforts in combating violent extremism.



## Activity 7: Validation of Strategy, Guidelines and Procedures on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)

Thematic Area: Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC)

The 18th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held on 6th June 2023 in Lusaka, Zambia. In one of its decisions, the meeting “urged the Secretariat to develop a regional CAAC strategy based on existing regional and international instruments taking into account best practices within the COMESA region”, Subsequently, COMESA Secretariat developed a regional Strategy on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC, the Technical Guidance Notes on Involvement of Children in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and the Standard Operating Procedures on Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-Integration (DDR). The regional CAAC strategy is intended to guide regional initiatives and provide an appreciation

for the effective handling of children affected by armed conflict in the region. The strategy also seeks to create synergy between Member States, other regional economic communities, the AU, and Civil Society Organizations focusing on children affected by armed conflicts. The desired outcome of the strategy is that all CAAC initiatives within the region are well coordinated and informed by key principles.

The three documents were validated and enriched with input from regional experts on peace and security. Subsequently, they will be presented for validation by experts from Member States and thereafter, to the COMESA Policy Organs for adoption





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## Activity 8: Regional Capacity Building Initiative on “Silencing The Guns”

Thematic Area: Youth, Peace and Security

COMESA in collaboration with the Government of Burundi, the Horn of Africa Youth Network, and Save the Children convened from the 3rd Regional Capacity Building of National Youth Councils, Youth-led and Youth Focused Organizations on the Implementation of the “Silencing the Guns Initiative” (STG) on 26th – 28th March 2024 in Gitega, Burundi,.

The overall objective of the training was to provide a platform to mobilize the national youth councils and youth organizations to take key actions to fast-track the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative as well as fast-tracking the development of national action plans on youth peace and security in the eastern Africa region.

The key outcomes of the training include the following:

- a. Strengthened youth engagement in the area of peace and security, especially in terms of the ‘Silencing the Guns’ initiative and in the promotion of social cohesion.
- b. The increased understanding of youth by 20% on different conflict prevention strategies, reporting, and interactions with regional economic communities’ Early Warning Systems.
- c. An established regional platform for networking, information sharing, and lessons learned for young people across the eastern African region

# First Quarter (Q1) in Pictures



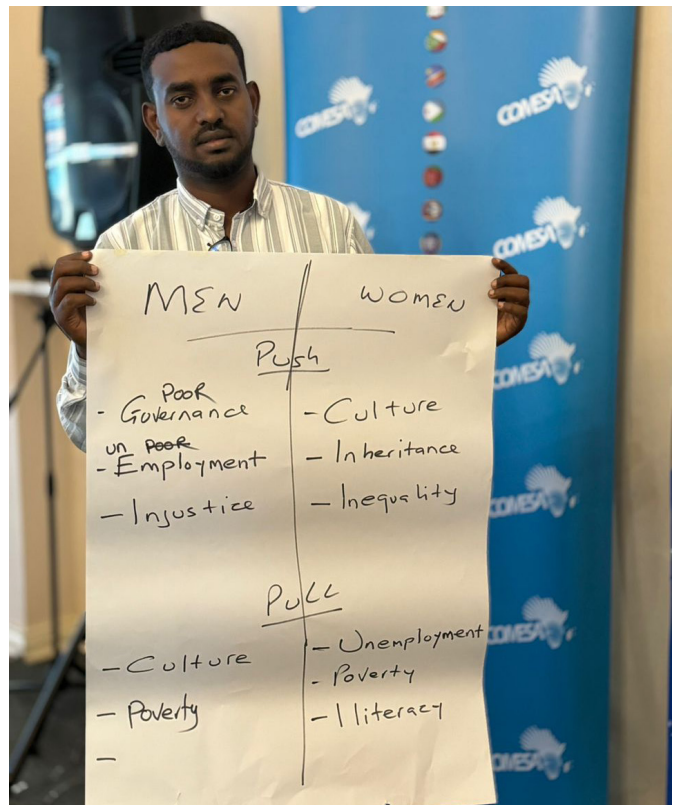
Gitega Burundi - Capacity Building of National Youth Councils, Youth Based/ Youth Focused Organizations on Implementing the Silencing the Guns Initiative



Mombasa, Kenya - Validation of the Northern Africa Cluster Report on the Nexus Between Climate Change, Peace, and Security



Nairobi, Kenya - Validation workshop of Strategy, Guidelines and Procedures on Children Affected by Armed Conflict



Training of Targeted Local Communities from Somalia and Zambia on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism



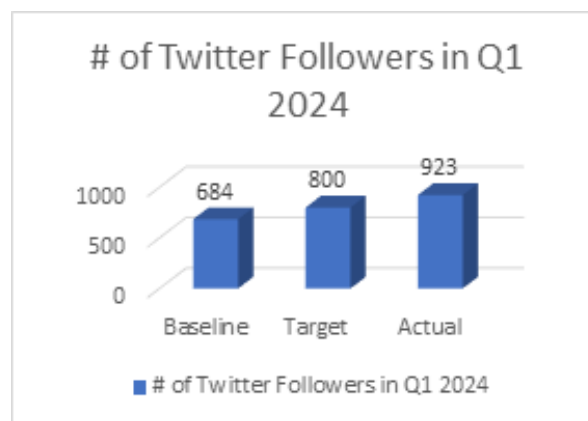
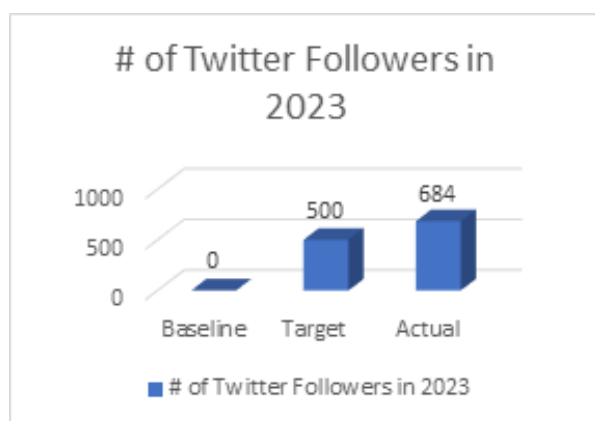
(Front L- R) Head of COMESA Governance, Peace and Security - Dr. Oita Etyang, (5th) the Director General of Multilateral Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Burundi - Ambassador Daudence Sindayigaya, (6th) Burundi Ambassador to Zambia - Ms. Evelyne Butoyi (7th) and the AU Continental Early Warning System (AU CEWS) representative - Mr. Taye Abdulkadir (8th).



## Visibility and Online Presence

The Governance Peace and Security unit (GPS), works to increase its visibility through social media presence and engagement on X-Twitter while implementing these activities. During the

first quarter, GPS increased its social media presence by over 20% since December 2023.



## Upcoming Events in Q2

Events	Dates
Support collaboration, networking and exchange of information between Counter Terrorism Centres in the region – Exchange visit of Zambia to Uganda	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Review and Finalisation of Zambia CSVRA Process	15 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Sensitization of CSOs on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) in the COMESA Region	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Review of Human Rights-based approaches to Conflict Prevention Framework	29 <sup>th</sup> April – 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2024
Regional Training of Financial Intelligence Units on strategic and Operational effectiveness	13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Capacity Building of Cross-Border Communities under the Trading for Peace Programme.	13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
Support Collaboration, Networking and Exchange of Information Between Counter Terrorism Centers in the Region - Exchange Visit of Malawi and Zimbabwe to Kenya	21 <sup>st</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
Fourth High-Level Inter-Ministerial Conference on the Role of Governments, AU, RECs/RMs in the Promotion of the YPS Agenda – North Africa Region	27 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2024



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