

---

## **The African Union Panel of the Wise and the Elusive Quest for a Proactive Approach to Conflict Prevention**

---

**Tim Murithi**

### **Introduction**

The African Union's (AU's) Panel of the Wise (PoW) was created by the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC Protocol) of the AU. It has the institutional mandate to engage and undertake preventive diplomacy, facilitation and mediation interventions to prevent and resolve violent conflict. In this regard, the PoW is an integral aspect of the AU's architecture for anticipating and managing political crisis situations and intervening in a timely fashion to prevent the escalation of a dispute or resolve existing tensions to reduce the likelihood of a return to violence. The PoW has been operational for almost two decades and this chapter assesses the recent work of the institution with a view to ascertaining whether it has fulfilled and upheld its mandate. The author interviewed two respondents, including a former coordinator of the work of the PoW, and a senior official in the AU Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, who has worked closely with the PoW. In addition, the chapter assesses the PoW's emerging work in monitoring the implementation of peace agreements and supporting political transitions, in particular during electoral polls. In this regard, the chapter analyses a number of illustrations and case studies that showcase and highlight the recent work undertaken by the PoW. The chapter assesses some of the administrative and bureaucratic challenges that continue to hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of the PoW in implementing its mandate. The chapter concludes with a number of recommendations on how the PoW can be empowered to play a much more proactive role, in particular through strengthening its engagement with Pan-African civil society, in order to enhance the AU's preventive response to conflicts across Africa.

## Revisiting the mandate of the AU Panel of the Wise

The PoW is constituted under the terms of Article 11 of the PSC Protocol. This Article stipulates that the PoW has the mandate “to support the efforts of the Peace and Security Council and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention” (AU Protocol 2002, Article 11.1). Specifically, the PoW has the mandate to “advise the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the AU Commission on all issues pertaining to the promotion, and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa” (AU Protocol 2002, Article 11.3). In addition, “at its own initiative, the Panel of the Wise shall undertake such action deemed appropriate to support the efforts of the Peace and Security Council and those of the Chairperson of the Commission for the prevention of conflict” (AU Protocol 2002, Article 11.4). This gives the PoW the authority to facilitate and mediate potential or ongoing disputes of its own volition.

Article 11 (1) of the PSC Protocol states that “in order to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, a Panel of the Wise shall be established.” In particular, Article 11(3) states that “the Panel may, as and when necessary and in the form it considers most appropriate, pronounce itself on any issue relating to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa” (African Union, 2002). The PoW was officially inaugurated in Addis Ababa on 18 December 2007. As the AU’s preventive diplomacy and mediation institution, the PoW is composed of five distinguished elder statesmen and women. Therefore, the PoW’s mandate is to prevent conflict rather than to resolve conflict, which is tasked to the AU’s peace and security institutions (Murithi and Mwaura, 2010). Specifically, the PoW is an integral aspect of the AU’s dedicated preventive diplomacy framework given its mandate to anticipate potential crisis situations and intervene in a timely fashion to prevent the escalation of a dispute or resolve existing tensions to reduce the likelihood of a return to violence (Lamamra, 2008).

The PoW’s modalities of action also include the provision for its members to support AU mediation teams in their efforts. In cases where a dedicated AU Special Envoy or Representative has been appointed, the PoW can provide support by undertaking additional shuttle diplomacy or behind the

scenes confidence-building between parties (El-Abdellaoui, 2009). In post-conflict situations, the PoW can also help and advise parties on how to resolve disputes related to the implementation of peace agreements and encourage parties to implement reconciliation processes. More recently, the PoW members were involved in preventive diplomacy and peace agreement monitoring initiatives relating to the Central African Republic (CAR), Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Sudan.

### **The Modalities for the Functioning of the AU Panel of the Wise**

The Modalities for the Functioning of the Panel of the Wise were adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 100<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 12 November 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (African Union, 2007). These Modalities stipulate that the PoW will be composed of five members “selected from among highly respected African personalities of high integrity and independence, who have made outstanding contributions to Africa in the areas of peace, security and development” (African Union, 2007:1). These individuals are selected by the Chairperson of the AU Commission based on consultations with the member states, but they are ultimately appointed through a decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. The Panel Modalities are explicit on the requirement that members of the PoW should not be politically active at the time of their appointment and throughout their tenure. They can serve for a renewable term of three years. The PoW members appoint from among themselves a chairperson who serves for only one year. In addition, “a member of the Panel may not be elected Chairperson more than once in any period of three years” (African Union, 2007:IV-1). The Panel can meet as and when required or at the request of the Council and Commission, but it has to meet at least three times a year.

The PoW can “facilitate the establishment of channels of communication between the Council and the Chairperson of the Commission, on the one hand, and parties engaged in a dispute, on the other hand, in order to prevent such dispute from escalating into conflict” (African Union, 2007). In addition, the PoW can “carry out fact-finding missions as an instrument of conflict ... conduct shuttle diplomacy between parties to a conflict in

cases where parties are not ready to engage in formal talks” (Murithi and Mwaura, 2010). When it deems it necessary, the PoW is also mandated to issue a press release or a statement on any matter that it is considering. This in effect constitutes an array of tools for deploying preventive diplomacy. Echoing the AU Protocol, the Panel Modalities stipulate that the PoW’s primary function is to “advise the Peace and Security Council and the Chairperson of the Commission on all issues pertaining to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa” (African Union, 2007, Mandate, 1). Therefore, its remit is clearly stipulated as being a supportive one rather than being a parallel institution to the Council or the Commission.

The Modalities, however, reiterate the independence of the PoW when they state that it “may, as and when necessary and in the form it considers most appropriate, pronounce itself on any issue relating to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa ... may act ... at its own initiative” (African Union, 2007, Mandate, 3). This gives the PoW a very broad mandate to effectively comment, draw attention to and intervene in virtually any situation in Africa that it considers worthy of attention. Herein lies the added value of the PoW. The AU PSC is usually constrained by the political considerations of its members and the wider AU membership when it comes to intervening in controversial situations, such as the 2020–22 crisis in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Similarly, the AU Commission is in theory bound by the decisions of its member states, notably the Executive Council and Assembly, and is therefore not always at liberty to function independently. The mandate stipulated by the Panel Modalities is broad and unencumbered by the typical political considerations that undermine efforts to promote early warning and response.

## **Internal dynamics within the AU and the constraints on the Panel of the Wise**

According to Respondent B (Interview, 2024), during the first decade of the activities of the PoW, in particular during the era of the first formations, including 2002–7, 2007–10, 2010–14, 2014–17 and 2017–20, the activities of the body were constrained and to some extent controlled by the previous AU Commission for Peace and Security. This meant that the body could not be as proactive as it should have been. In particular, the PoW has had to confront the reluctance and intransigence of AU member states in acknowledging that there are ensuing crisis situations in their countries that need early warning or mediation interventions in order to de-escalate tensions (Engel, 2022). There has been a long-standing practice by African governments of curating and controlling the external narrative that there are no internal tensions until the situation explodes into social unrest or political violence. In these situations, according to Respondent B, the efforts by the PoW to proactively undertake preventive interventions would be undermined by the government in question making representations to the AU Commission to prevent the issue from being considered either by the Chair of the AU Commission or by the AU PSC. The government in question could also prevent the PoW from travelling to its territory by failing to process protocol clearances and by imposing artificial barriers to the body engaging with a wide range of stakeholders including the government, political opposition, civil society, business actors and other actors to identify ways to de-escalate tensions and to address the interests of all the concerned parties. In this regard, the PoW has, on the one hand, had to work with its one hand tied behind its back in terms of its engagement with AU member states. On the other hand, the lack of adequate administrative and bureaucratic support from within the AU Commission has also hampered the PoW's ability to function as a fully-fledged mechanism for early prevention of conflicts across Africa. This led to a situation where the PoW, as one of the African Peace and Security Architecture's (APSA's) key institutions, was rendered ineffective in undertaking and sustaining preventive crisis interventions. It is self-evident that conflict prevention and mediation is a much more cost-effective way to anticipate and resolve the multiple disputes that continue to afflict Africa, prior to them degenerating

to the point where they require the establishment of expensive peace support operations. According to Respondent A (Interview, 2024), this was a self-defeating posture that the internal management practices of the former AU Commission for Peace and Security instrumented and this undermined the efficacy of APSA in terms of preventing and transforming conflict. The extent to which it will succeed in having a genuine impact in Africa will be based on its ability to operate and initiate interventions of its own volition and its analysis of potential problematic situations that are under the radar of the AU PSC and the AU Commission.

According to Respondent B (Interview, 2024), more recently the PoW that was appointed in 2022 has re-asserted its function in working of its own volition and independently where emergent crisis situations need its attention. However, its limited budget allocation means that it cannot always engage when and where it chooses to intervene. The PoW can add value to the initiatives of the AU PSC or the Chairperson of the Commission and contribute effectively to conflict prevention and mediation if it is enabled and empowered to do its work. This requires a pragmatic appreciation of the need to continue to transform the PoW into a proactive institution that prioritises preventive interventions based on a much more nuanced understanding of the importance of early warning and action prior to the escalation of conflicts, the engaged commitment to mediation and peacemaking when situations have deteriorated, and the effective monitoring of the implementation of peace agreements by holding governments accountable for upholding their pledges.

### **Subsidiary structures and partner institutions of the AU Panel of the Wise**

The PoW, which has been operational for more than two decades, has inspired the formation of subsidiary structures and partner institutions which can play the role of “force multipliers” in the effort to mainstream preventive responses to crises and conflict across Africa. There has been a steady establishment of autonomous frameworks for conflict prevention and mediation, such as the PoW. These formations are nominally mandated to achieve the same outcome of the early detection and prevention of

violent conflict, including the analysis and mitigation of bad governance practices that can trigger the escalation of tensions. The lack of harmonisation and coordination between the AU and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are a persistent institutional challenge. In some instances, the RECs are establishing and operationalising institutions that are mandated to achieve the same outcomes as pre-existing AU departments. The PoW has, through the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), sought to revitalise their cooperation with mechanisms at the RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RMs), including the:

- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Council of the Wise;
- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Panel of Elders;
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Committee of Elders;
- Southern African Development Community (SADC) Panel of Elders;
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Mediation Reference Group.

In 2021, to increase the ability of women to drive peace processes, the AU established the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). The “network provides a platform for strategic advocacy, capacity building and networking aimed at enhancing the implementation of the commitments for the inclusion of women in peacemaking in Africa” (Limo, 2018:45). FemWise-Africa is working to professionalise the role of women in peacemaking, to ensure that women lead high-level mediation missions and contribute to establishing local and national infrastructures for peace. In this regard, PanWise is a foundational framework for collaborative subregional engagements and the launch of the national chapters of FemWise-Africa and the Network of African Youth (WiseYouth). This highlights the importance of creating platforms for the proactive participation of women and youth in coordination efforts to promote preventive diplomacy, mediation and peacebuilding.

Despite the noble intention of leveraging the PanWise as a means to link and coordinate these formations, the wider AU APSA system has, in practice, faced a number of challenges in terms of efforts to ensure effective synergy among these institutions. In some instances, there have been overlapping or competing mandates that can undermine efforts to harmonise and coordinate initiatives to confront and prevent the escalation of tensions in Africa (Engel, 2022). Despite the number of retreats that these formations have convened to discuss their efforts to harmonise and coordinate their work, the present reality in Africa is that this has not translated into the desired outcomes of improved governance and the early prevention of violent conflict. The PanWise concept was introduced to break down the silos that persist between peer institutions in the AU and RECs. There are initial efforts at the strategic level where PanWise is playing an important convening role. These, however, have not fully translated into effective coordination on the ground in terms of the early prevention and resolution of crises.

The PoW also attends the Annual High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa that focuses on the ongoing political crisis across Africa. The AU Special Envoys anchor the AU's mediation efforts and have contributed to developing negotiated peace agreements in CAR, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan. The High-Level Retreat enables the continent's mediators and facilitators to debrief and share their experiences and challenges in a number of crisis situations, including in the CAR, Sudan and South Sudan, with a view to identifying strategies to strengthen mediation and peacemaking processes across Africa. For example, the AU Special Representative for the Central African Republic was actively engaged and involved in the process of mediating the Khartoum Agreement, which was signed on 6 February 2019. Therefore, the inclusion of the PoW in the High-Level Retreat gives the PoW members an opportunity to exchange insights and experiences with a key mechanism of the AU used to promote political dialogue and to pursue mediation efforts.

The PoW signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Peer-Review Mechanism (APRM) Panel of Eminent Personalities, which is mandated to address governance issues. This provides a framework for



both institutions to work on addressing the structural causes of conflict. On 10 January 2023, the Second Joint Retreat of the PoW and the APRM Panel of Eminent persons was convened in Johannesburg, South Africa. The communique issued by the two bodies encouraged the two panels to implement the Framework of Cooperation to further enhance synergies in areas of conflict prevention and peacemaking in Africa. The scope for enhanced collaboration between AU bodies is integral to increasing the focus on the debilitating conflict situations across Africa. It also serves as a model for deepening the interface between the AU bodies that are working on peacemaking, peacebuilding and governance issues.

Ultimately, the PoW is accountable to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which is the highest decision-making structure of the AU. Therefore, the PoW can engage with the highest levels of decision-making within the AU system. On 6 February 2022, during the 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, African leaders appointed the members of the Fifth Panel of the Wise, with Professor Babacar Kante designated as chairperson (African Union, 2024b).

### **Case studies of AU Panel of the Wise interventions**

The PoW works have mainly focused on engaging with countries that are undergoing political transitions, as well as in monitoring the implementation of signed peace agreements. In this regard, the PoW continues to have relevance as a contributing factor in the efforts to foster stability and peace in Africa. Given the continuing spate of violent conflicts across Africa, the PoW can continue to play a role in influencing and accompanying AU High-Level mediators in a number of situations across Africa. More specifically, the PoW has played a monitoring and facilitating role in a number of countries, including Chad, Mali, Gabon, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger and South Sudan and is also engaged in efforts to support peacemaking in Sudan following the April 2023 escalation of conflict.

In May 2023, in line with its mandate, the PoW members Domitien Ndayizeye and Babacar Kante undertook a fact-finding mission to Chad to engage with key stakeholders across the country and evaluate the political and security

situation there. The mission also sought to assess the extent to which efforts were being undertaken to ensure an inclusive, comprehensive and transparent political transition in Chad (African Union, 2023). The PoW engaged with stakeholders in the Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue that was anchoring the political transition in the country. In line with its conflict resolution mandate, the PoW members Domitien Ndayizeye and Babacar Kante also undertook a mission to CAR to assess the developments relating to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR-CAR) (African Union, 2023). In particular, the PoW evaluated the political and security situation and assessed progress, while suggesting strategies to support the country in achieving peace, reconciliation and democracy (Amani Africa Media and Research Services, 2024).

In December 2023, in line with its conflict resolution mandate, the PoW undertook a fact-finding mission to South Sudan to evaluate the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (African Union, 2024a). In particular, the PoW reviewed the persistent challenges affecting the efforts to address political tension in the country to ensure security and the implementation of humanitarian interventions that are necessary to consolidate and sustain peace in the country. In line with its preventive diplomacy mandate, Justice Effie Owuor, a member of the PoW, undertook a mission to engage with the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission prior to the elections that took place in Nigeria, and to promote a peaceful atmosphere amid tensions following the announcement of presidential and parliamentary election results in the country (African Union, 2023).

### **The deployment of AU Panel of the Wise members to high-level mediation initiatives: The case of Ethiopia**

Dr Phumzile Mlabo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa and a member of the PoW, was deployed as a key member of the high-level panel that oversaw the mediation process between the Federal Government of the Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) on 2 November 2022, in Pretoria, South Africa (African Union, 2023). The utility of deploying PoW members to participate in the high-level panel formations

to pursue mediation in Africa again came to the fore through this intervention, illustrating the necessity of enhancing preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention institutions of the AU. In the case of the signing of the COHA, former President Olesegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and Dr Mlabo-Ngcuka facilitated the efforts to achieve a signed agreement with the tacit approval of the two opposing sides that were caught in a debilitating two-year conflict that led to approximately 600 000 fatalities and the displacement of almost two million people. On 7 November 2022, the high-level panel convened in Nairobi, Kenya, where the military leaders of the Ethiopian government and the TPLF agreed on the modalities of ensuring humanitarian access in the Tigray region. On 12 November 2022, the high-level panel oversaw the process of the parties signing an additional agreement entitled the 'Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities of the Implementation of the Agreement for a Lasting Peace between the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front.' It remains to be seen whether the parties to the COHA will implement it with integrity or whether there will be back-sliding and reneging on key elements of the agreement, such as the commitment to adopt and implement transitional justice processes in line with the provisions of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP). This AU intervention points to opportunities to deploy PoW members to actively support mediation efforts to address crises in Africa. The members of the PoW have a high-level stature that remains a significant factor in enabling mediation processes to move forward, particularly when belligerents have delegitimised each other and are unable to meet without the intervention of a third party.

### **AU Panel of the Wise engagement with the AU Peace and Security Council**

In March 2017, the AU PSC, during its 665<sup>th</sup> meeting, requested the PoW to provide it with quarterly briefings on its work and activities. On 13 March 2024, the PoW briefed the AU PSC during its 1205<sup>th</sup> session on its activities across Africa, as well as its collaboration with its subsidiary bodies, notably FemWise-Africa and WiseYouth. The AU PSC issued a communique following its 1204<sup>th</sup> Meeting on the briefing by the PoW on its activities in

Africa (AU PSC, 2024b). The AU PSC communique emphasised the need for the wider AU system, through the guidance of the AU Commission, to engage more proactively with the work of the PoW. In particular, the PoW continues to remain under-resourced in terms of a dedicated secretariat with an adequate staff complement, and a sufficient budget to effectively implement its mandate as a key pillar for conflict prevention in Africa (AU PSC, 2024b). A perennial challenge confronting the PoW since its inception has been its ability to deploy members of the body proactively to prevent emerging crises and to continually engage with country-specific processes, owing to the absence of an independent and financially self-contained secretariat (AU PSC, 2024).

### **AU Panel of the Wise engagement with Pan-African civil society**

A significant gap still persists in the PoW engagement with African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and think-tanks that are working on conflict prevention and peacemaking interventions. The Constitutive Act of the African Union states that one of its objectives is “to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society” and to promote the “participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union” (African Union, 2000). Furthermore, the AU PSC Protocol and the AU’s Mediation Support Handbook advocate the inclusion of civil society actors at different stages of the mediation process, from conflict analysis to stakeholder identification and throughout the intervention process. The PoW engages with civil society actors in the target countries where they are intervening. However, there is added value for the PoW to engage with African CSOs that have decades of experience in supporting, analysing and building capacity for peacemaking initiatives across Africa. Given the number of CSOs that work thematically on issues related to the AU’s peacemaking, peace support operation and peacebuilding processes, there is scope for also enhancing the coordination and collaboration between the AU and non-state actors by liaising and engaging with these citizens’ organisations to achieve the mission of the AU on the ground.

There is also a need for the PoW to strengthen its interface with knowledge management institutions and structures, including African think tanks and


civil society actors. More specifically, in February 2024, the AU Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security established a Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace) which can serve as a source of timely research, analysis and joint scenario planning to pre-empt the worsening of crises and to ensure early preventive diplomacy initiatives to address conflict situations across Africa (AU PSC, 2024b). The PoW does not have a dedicated knowledge management component, which undermines its ability to use its institutional memory to undertake strategic reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of future interventions (AU PSC, 2024b). In particular, the AU NeTT4Peace is a network of African think tanks that can collate and transmit expert and technical advice to inform mediators, training and the sharing of mediation knowledge. However, the PoW can establish a formal relationship with the AU NeTT4Peace so that a working relationship is established to ensure that regular engagement and exchange of insights and experiences is achieved in a much more consistent and predictable manner in future. In this regard, there is also a need to ensure the coordination of a knowledge management process with the other constituent components of PanWise, FemWise-Africa and WiseYouth to ensure that there is a cross-fertilisation of insights, lessons learned and the pooling of collective expertise, which will ultimately contribute to more effective joint deployments across Africa (AU PSC, 2024b).

### **Leveraging the AU Panel of the Wise to promote the elusive quest for a proactive approach to conflict prevention**

The sections above have illustrated the continuing need for the PoW's work. It has played a noteworthy role in preventive diplomacy and in supporting conflict prevention processes in Africa. However, the PoW is still not being used to its full potential, because it cannot function independently as a result of resource and personnel constraints. The PoW has played a significant role in backstopping electoral processes, which in the past have become sites of contestation and even violent conflict. In this regard, the PoW adds value to the work of the AU and contributes nominally to addressing conflict situations. The PSC Protocol mandates the PoW to undertake early interventions of its own volition without the sanction of the PSC or the AU Commission. This is a function that still remains to be

deployed to its fullest potential and this can be achieved only by empowering the PoW with its own secretariat and a dedicated and recurring financial budget with adequate personnel to conduct its work. The PoW's convening power is also able to convene horizon scanning initiatives to preempt the emergence of future crisis situations, which will contribute to entrenching a culture of proactive preventive intervention.

## Conclusion

The PoW has mainly focused on engaging with countries that are undergoing political transitions, and on monitoring the implementation of signed peace agreements. In this regard, the PoW continues to have relevance as a contributing factor in the efforts to foster stability and peace in Africa, through its role in monitoring the implementation of peace agreements and in providing a standby facility to resolve disputes, in particular during electoral periods. However, given the continuing spate of violent conflicts across Africa, the PoW needs to play a much more proactive role in conflict prevention and peacemaking processes across the continent. In order to do so, the PoW will need to be enabled to achieve these objectives through a dedicated staff complement and regularly allocated funds. This will help it to creatively use the existing technical infrastructure such as the AU NeTT4Peace to ensure and establish comprehensive follow-up and re-engagement strategies for missions conducted by the PoW. These include periodic assessments and revisiting previously engaged contexts to ensure the implementation of recommendations and to adapt interventions as necessary for sustained peace and stability across Africa. 

## Reference List

- African Union. (2002) *Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- African Union. (2023) *Twenty-Fifth Statutory Meeting of the AU Panel of the Wise*, 13 May 2023. Available from: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/press-release-25-statutory-meeting-final.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2024].
- African Union Panel of the Wise. (2013) *The African Union Panel of the Wise: Strengthening Relations with Similar Regional Mechanisms*. Report of the Panel of the Wise High-Level

- Retreat held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 4 and 5 June 2012, ACCORD, Durban, South Africa.
- African Union Peace and Security Council. (2023) *Communique*, PSC/PR/COMM.1152 (2023), 11 May.
- African Union. (2023) *Twenty-Fifth Statutory Meeting of the AU Panel of the Wise*, 13 May 2023, available at: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/press-release-25-statutory-meeting-final.pdf> [Accessed 1 March 2024].
- African Union Peace and Security Council. (2024a) *Communique: Briefing on the Situation in South Sudan*, PSC/PR/COMM.1202.1 (2024), 27 February.
- African Union Peace and Security Council. (2024b) *Communique: Briefing of the AU Panel of the Wise*, PSC/PR/COMM.1204 (2024), 13 March.
- Amani Africa Media and Research Services. (2024) *Briefing by the Panel of the Wise, FemWise and WiseYouth on their activities in Africa*. Available from: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-by-the-panel-of-the-wise-femwise-and-wiseyouth-on-their-activities-in-africa/> [Accessed 12 March 2024].
- El-Abdellaoui, Jamila. (2009) 'The Panel of the Wise: A comprehensive introduction to a critical pillar of the African peace and security architecture', ISS Paper 193. Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies.
- Engel, Ulf. (2022) The African Union's Panel of the Wise: An unfulfilled promise? *The Conversation*, 22 June, Pp.1–3.
- Interview with Respondent A, Senior Political Affairs Officer, African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AU CPAPS), conducted on 21 February 2024.
- Interview with Respondent B, Former Coordinator, AU Panel of the Wise, Addis Ababa, conducted on 22 March 2024.
- Lamamra, Ramtane. (2008) Preface. In: *Panel of the Wise: A critical pillar of the African peace and security architecture*. Secretariat of the Panel of the Wise, Addis Ababa, African Union.
- Limo, Irene. (2018) 'What do networks of women mediators mean for mediation support in Africa?' *Conflict Trends*, Issue 1, p. 45.
- Murithi, Tim and Mwaura, Charles. (2010) The Panel of the Wise. In: Engel, Ulf and Porto, João Gomes eds. *Africa's new peace and security architecture: Promoting norms and institutionalising solutions*. Ashgate, Farnham and Burlington, p. 78.