



Media Note

New York

21 September 2023

UN Insights: Friday 22 and Saturday 23 September

World leaders are in New York for the UN General Assembly's high-level week, during which they will participate in a host of summits and side events on global issues. Over the course of the week, Crisis Group will highlight forthcoming meetings with a focus on those that address peace, security and current conflicts. We will release a note each evening commenting on the next day's events. *These notes are for attribution, and quotations from Crisis Group staff are available for use by the media.*

1. In Focus: The Future of UN Peacebuilding

Ministers representing the members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) will meet on Friday morning for its main event at the high-level week, a [discussion](#) about the future of multilateral peacebuilding cooperation. Convened under Croatia's chairmanship, participants will discuss ways to improve UN-led peacebuilding efforts at a moment of heightened geopolitical competition and dwindling financial support.

Discussions about the future of UN peacebuilding have growing louder within UN circles over the course of 2023. Recent international reports on the future of multilateral cooperation – namely, the report of the [High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism](#) and the [New Agenda for Peace](#) – both identify strengthening the PBC as a means of improving the UN's responses to issues that straddle conflict, peace and development.

Countries participating in Friday morning's event are likely to preview the arguments and recommendations that they will push for during next September's Summit of the Future, as well as a review of the UN peacebuilding architecture slated for 2025.

Crisis Group's President and CEO Comfort Ero will brief the gathering alongside the head of the UN's political affairs and peacebuilding department and the vice president of the World Bank. She plans to highlight how peace can be achieved only if multilateral security interventions are linked to economic stabilisation and development support.

Ero tells the PBC,

We talk a lot about living in a polycrisis world. But one reason we struggle with the polycrisis is that it is also a polycentric world – there are different decision-makers addressing problems in different policy centers, and they need to coordinate more.

2. Looking Ahead: Peace and Security in Africa

On Saturday, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, the regional organisation's dedicated body for preventing and managing conflicts, will meet in New York to [discuss](#) the financing of African-led peace operations. The topic is a hot one in both New York and Addis Ababa, and both the Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council held dedicated sessions on this topic earlier in May. The subject will also top the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the two Councils next month in Addis Ababa.

Since 2016, Security Council members have [debated](#) the idea of using UN assessed contributions to fund African-led operations on a case-by-case basis. The Security Council's three African countries (the A3 – Ghana, Gabon and Mozambique) are pushing hard for the Council to agree on a framework for future UN-AU funding arrangements by the end of 2023.

After years of political obstacles, there are signs that the time is ripe for such an agreement. Under the Biden administration, the U.S. has offered its support to the A3's efforts, in a sharp contrast to the Trump administration's opposition to any such arrangement. The Secretary-General has also thrown his weight behind the idea and urged the Security Council to reach an agreement on this framework as quickly as possible.

Members of the AU Peace and Security Council will likely ask the A3 for updates on their negotiations with other members of the Security Council. While financial burden-sharing arrangements will likely be the issue that receives the most interest, ministers on the Peace and Security Council are also likely to want to better understand how issues related political oversight of African-led operations and human rights compliance requirements are factoring into the negotiations.

Crisis Group's Chief of Advocacy Elissa Jobson says,

Agreement on a decision for the UN to fund AU operations is long overdue. While there's still a number of key issues to iron out, both organisations need to reach a compromise if they wish to strengthen their collective responses to conflicts in Africa.

3. Crisis Group Will Also Watch...

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, along with Egypt (in its capacity as COP27 president) and the United Arab Emirates (in its capacity as COP28 president), will host a ministerial meeting on the Loss and Damage Fund.

Cyprus will host a meeting with the Security Council's permanent members to discuss the situation in the country (see a recent Crisis Group commentary on the UN and Cyprus [here](#)).

The U.S. will convene a principals meeting of the International Atrocities Prevention Working Group (an informal grouping that in addition to the U.S. includes the UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, Netherlands and Denmark).

This Crisis Group media note will be the last on the 2023 General Assembly high-level week. You can continue to follow our work on the UN at www.crisisgroup.org.