

# Ministerial meeting on the situation in Mozambique and Operations of SAMIM

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Tomorrow (7 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1119<sup>th</sup> session on the situation in Mozambique and operations of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). Indicating the high political weight Namibia attached to the agenda, the session is to be convened at ministerial level.

Opening remarks is expected from Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of the PSC for November followed by a statement from Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS). SAMIM Force Commander is scheduled to make presentation. Veronica Nataniel Macamo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique as the concerned state, and Christophe Lutundula Apala Pen'Apala, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as the Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as well as the representative of the SADC Secretariat are expected to make statements. The Representative of the European Union (EU) may also deliver statement.

Southern Africa region had been less affected by terrorism and violent extremism compared to other regions until the advent of Islamist insurgents known as Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamma'ah (ASWJ) in Mozambique's gas-rich province of Cabo Delgado. Since its first attack launched on 5 October 2017 in Mocimboa da Praia, the group has become a major security threat not

only to Mozambique but also to the wider region. Amid the uptick of violence unleashed by this group, on 23 June 2021, the extraordinary SADC summit approved deployment of SAMIM as a regional response to support Mozambique to combat terrorism and act of violent extremism under Scenario 6 of the African Standby Force. When its deployment commenced on 15 July 2021, SAMIM is envisaged to be made up of 2,916 soldiers including two special forces squadron, 4 military helicopters, two surface patrol ships, 1 submarine and 1 maritime surveillance aircraft and support personnel. Troop contributing countries include Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Just ahead of SAMIM's deployment, earlier on 9 July 2021, Rwanda also deployed 1,000 troops to assist Mozambique in its fight against terrorism.

SAMIM's deployment was initially for three months, but its mandate was renewed in October 2021, January, July and most recently in August 2022. The latest mandate renewal, during the 42<sup>nd</sup> SADC summit held on 17 August, extended SAMIM's mandate for one year while 'de-escalating the intervention from scenario 6 to scenario 5 and subsequently scenario 4'. This signals the intention to expand SAMIM's orientation to include and focus on peacebuilding activities. SADC has already initiated a Peacebuilding Support to Mozambique with the financial support from Early Response Mechanism (ERM). At the national level, it is to be recalled that the government of Mozambique unveiled the Reconstruction Plan for Cabo Delgado (PRCD) in September last year.

Tomorrow's session will be the second time that Council considers SAMIM since its deployment in July last year. It was during its 1062<sup>nd</sup> session in January 2022 that Council discussed SAMIM for the first-time focusing on the financial and logistical support to the mission. Apart from endorsing the mission, it is to be recalled that the 1062<sup>nd</sup> session took important decisions, including to provide SADC with required

equipment from the Continental Logistics Base (CLB) in Douala, Cameroon, and deliver 'substantial additional equipment' from the second batch of military aid being donated by China to the AU.

Among others, tomorrow's session will focus on assessing progress made towards the implementation of these decisions. On the logistical support, as highlighted in the PSC's [briefing note](#), the first batch of equipment from the CLB was airlifted to Mozambique in July 2022. Angola and Zambia have availed airlift capability for the shipment of the remaining equipment. However, no progress has been made in the shipment of equipment from the second batch, which is expected to be donated by China and shipped directly to Mozambique as agreed during the 1062<sup>nd</sup> PSC session. On the financial support, the major update will be EU's financial support of around EUR 2 million and EUR 15 million under the Early Response Mechanism (ERM) and European Peace Facility (EPF), respectively. 70 percent of the 2 million funding has already been disbursed to SADC while the remaining amount is expected to be received soon. The 15 million funding seems to be also in the pipeline following the Commission's endorsement of the amount.

The security situation in Cabo Delgado and progress in the implementation of SAMIM's mandate is expected to be the other focus of the session. The presentation by SAMIM's Force Commander is likely to focus on these issues. Sixteen months of military intervention by SAMIM, alongside Rwandan forces and Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM), has considerably degraded the capabilities of the terrorist groups, restoring calm to some parts of Cabo Delgado and creating conducive conditions for the return of displaced people in some localities. Despite the major setback that terrorist groups have suffered, they also proved to be adaptable. According to the [data](#) provided by African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), in the first quarter of 2022 (1 January-31 March 2022), northern Mozambique witnessed a 'leap

in violence spilling rapidly into Cabo Delgado', registering 55 terrorist attacks and 186 resultant deaths. The same source recorded a slight decline in the [second quarter](#) (1 April-30 June) with 45 terrorist attacks and 110 resultant deaths. While central and northern districts of Cabo Delgado province have continued to experience violence, terrorists have further advanced into Cabo Delgado's southern districts of Ancuabe and Chiure. They have also crossed Cabo Delgado province southward into the neighbouring province of Nampula in June for the first time since the onset of the insurgency in 2017. On how this situation aggravates the humanitarian situation, the [UN Refugee Agency](#) reported that 'displacement figures have increased by 20 per cent to 946,508 in the first half of this year.'

Tomorrow's session is also an opportunity to deliberate on some of the challenges that SAMIM is facing and discuss the way forward. In this regard, the first and most obvious one is the resource challenge. So far, SADC uses its own resources to sustain the deployment, which the regional bloc praised this experience during its January extraordinary summit as 'a unique precedent on the African continent'. While the reliance over its own funding is indeed a reflection of the resoluteness of the regional bloc and its member states to resolve the crisis within their jurisdiction, the nature of the challenge is such that financing SAMIM is not something that SADC alone can bear. While EU's announcement of EUR 15 million funding to SAMIM in September to provide its military component with camp fortifications and storage containers, medical equipment, vehicles, and boats, as well as technological devices goes some way in addressing the financial challenge, SAMIM requires further support not only for logistics but also for the sustenance of the troops as well.

The second challenge is lack of strong coordination among the different forces operating in the same theatre of operation.

In this regard, AU's ACSRT [observed](#) that 'the fact that insurgent groups appear to enjoy apparent freedom of movement within Northern Mozambique reflects a poor level of strategic coordination between the deployed international forces that are each responsible for their own operational areas.' There is accordingly a need for working with the host country to ensure that the forces operate complementarily and with smooth coordination as a matter of strategic necessity.

The third is the absence of an effective cooperation and coordination mechanism between the AU and SADC regarding the mission. SADC does not seem to be keen to involve AU in the operation of the mission, which perhaps emanates from the regional bloc's perception that the mission remains exclusively a regional matter. This is despite the expectation that the deployment of African Standby Force should happen within the context of a closer AU-RECs partnership, as highlighted in the first PSC-RECs/RMs annual consultative meeting. It was also within that expectation that PSC during its 1062<sup>nd</sup> meeting requested the Commission and SADC Secretariat to 'provide regular updates to the Council on the progress in the implementation of SAMIM's mandate...' However, as pointed out in the briefing note prepared for the session, 'information sharing and enhanced cooperation and coordination between the AU and SADC are still limited'.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communique. The PSC may commend SAMIM for degrading the capabilities of the terrorist groups while expressing concerns over the continued attacks in Cabo Delgado and the expansion of the threat to the neighbouring province of Nampula. Council may endorse the communique of the 42<sup>nd</sup> ordinary summit of SADC that extended the mandate of SAMIM. Cognizant of the need to address the structural causes of the scourge in northern Mozambique for a lasting peace and stability in the region, Council may emphasize the importance of adopting a comprehensive strategy that combines both military and non-

military measures. In this regard, it may welcome the transition of SAMIM from Scenario 6 to Scenario 5 as envisaged in the communique adopted at the 12 April 2022 extraordinary summit of the Organ Troika of SADC Summit. It may also commend the peacebuilding efforts of SADC as well as the government of Mozambique for the recovery and rehabilitation of the affected areas. Council may encourage the government to effectively utilize the AU Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Centre in Cairo. Regarding the financial constraints of the mission, Council may call up on the EU to expedite the release of the 15 million financial supports to SAMIM. It may also make similar call up on China to expedite the shipment of the pledged equipment directly to Mozambique to partly address the logistical challenge of the mission. In relation of coordination, Council may once again request the Commission and SADC Secretariat to provide regular updates to the Council on progress in the implementation of SAMIM's mandate; and may further request both to explore and operationalize an agreed modality to enhance cooperation and coordination between the two sides.