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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1182ND MEETING

27 OCTOBER 2023
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1182 (2023)

COMMUNIQUE



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1182nd meeting held on 27 October 2023, on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Counter-Terrorism in Africa:

The Peace and Security Council,

Deeply concerned by the growing threat to peace, security, and stability in Africa posed by the spread of terrorism and violent extremism throughout the Continent, which is undermining AU efforts to silence the guns in Africa by 2030, and derailing the progress towards the realization of the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063 and United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Recalling Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.(XVI)] on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, through which the Assembly decided to establish a Ministerial Committee on Counter-Terrorism to give impetus to the Continental fight against terrorism;

Also recalling the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and all its previous decisions and pronouncements on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, particularly, Communiqué [PSC/MIN/COMM.1111 (2022)] adopted at its 1111th Meeting, held on 7 October 2022;

Reaffirming AU commitment to the international counter-terrorism regime as outlined in relevant OAU/AU treaties and conventions, UN Security Council resolutions, and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; as well as the AU the solidarity with the people of the Continent, particularly those adversely impacted by the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism;

Taking Note of the Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Daniel Owassa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo in his capacity as the PSC Chairperson for the month of October 2023; the Introductory Statement by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the presentation by Mr. Idriss Mounir Lallali, the Acting Director of the Africa Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACRST); and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. ***Takes note*** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Counter-terrorism in Africa and ***expresses deep concern*** over the expanding and worsening scourge of terrorism and violent extremism on the Continent, particularly in the Sahel, Great Lakes, Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa regions and increasingly the Southern African Region, exacerbated by a plethora of factors, including, political instability, climate change;
2. ***Notes with deep concern*** sustained financing of terrorism activities, particularly the growing linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, illicit exploitation and trade of mineral and natural resource, as well as illicit financial flows with debilitating impact on the national economies of the Member States;
3. ***Condemns in the strongest terms***, all acts of terrorism and violent extremism committed in the Continent by whomsoever, wherever, which cannot be justified under whatever circumstances;

expresses condolences to the immediate families and friends of all those who lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks; **reiterates** the determination of the AU to rid Africa of the scourges of terrorism and violent extremism; and to this end, **stresses the need** to name and shame all those countries, entities and individuals supporting terrorist and violent extremist activities;

4. **Reiterates the call** on all Member States to refrain from inciting, instigating, organizing, facilitating, participating in financing or encouraging terrorist activities; and **encourages them** to take necessary measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used as terrorist sanctuaries, and in the same vein, **appeals** to international partners to take necessary measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used by terrorists for the preparation, financing, or organization of terrorist acts intended to be committed against other countries or their citizens;

5. **While reaffirming** its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and national unity of all Member States, **emphasizes** the primary responsibility of Member States to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism and, in this regard, **underscores** the continued commitment of the AU to promote holistic and inclusive approaches, as well as African ownership and lead role in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, within the context of promoting African solutions to African problems;

6. **Underlines** the importance of protecting critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks, including through public-private partnerships and, in this regard, **requests** the ACSRT working in collaboration with partners such as the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UNCTED), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), to develop training programs on protection of soft targets and critical infrastructures, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2341 (2007);

7. **Underlines the imperative** of comprehensive national, regional and continental approaches to address the growing scourge of terrorism and its root causes and all factors that facilitate its growth and spread and, in this regard, **stresses the need** to prioritize political solutions alongside military and security interventions as well as the need to fully implement the Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government, including the development of Comprehensive Continental Strategic Plan of Action on countering terrorism in Africa;

8. **Highlights** the need for context-specific interventions tailored to address the specific security, governance, development and humanitarian needs of the affected countries and regions with the participation of local community leaders, faith-based leaders, women and the youth;

9. **Strongly condemns** all forms of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Member States, which undermines the efforts of the Continent to silence the guns and aggravates crises with devastating effects on Africa's development and stability;

10. **Underlines the importance** of effectively fighting the cooperation and links between terrorists and other criminal as well as separatist linked to transnational organized crime to halt logistical and financial resources that such linkage provides to the spread of terrorism; and requests the ACSRT to conduct a field research for purposes of gathering empirical evidence for policy response on the nexus between Transnational organized Crime (TNOC) and Terrorism;

11. **Calls on** Member States to effectively regulate the importation, movement, storage, distribution and use of materials and components that can potentially be used for making improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and, in this respect, **requests** the ACSRT to assist Member States in the development of their Counter IED capabilities and **encourages** Member States to ensure that their

counter-terrorism measures, including the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), fully comply with International Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law;

12. **Underscores** the need for enhanced cooperation, coordination and complementarity of efforts between and among Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) including, through cross-border joint operations, extradition agreements, information and intelligence sharing; and in this respect, **requests** the ACSRT to enhance terrorism-related information exchanges and to further strengthen its Continental Counter-Terrorism Early Warning System and Situation Room, and to facilitate accessibility of its database to National and Regional Focal Points;

13. **Encourages** Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify all regional, Continental and global counter-terrorism instruments;

14. **Commends** the Commission and in particular, the ACSRT, for the continued provision of technical support to Member States, including through capacity building interventions that include national threat assessments; assistance in the development of National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies and Prevention of Violent Extremism Plans of Action; Counter-Terrorism training; promotion of exchange of intelligence through the ACSRT national Focal Points; the provision of timely Counter-Terrorism Analytical products through its Continental Counter-Terrorism Early Warning System, and the updating, as necessary, of their national legislation, in fulfilment of their international obligations, in addition to guidance and assistance in the establishment of National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Fusions Centres/Counter-terrorism Centres; and **reiterates the request** to the Chairperson of the Commission to redouble efforts in mobilizing the resources required by the ACSRT to enable it to more effectively discharge its mandate;

15. **Further underlines the need** for:

- (i) **Expediting the establishment** of the AU Ministerial Committee on Counter-Terrorism and the operationalization of the African Counter-Terrorism Coordination Task Force (A2CTF), under the office of the AU Special Representative for Counterterrorism Cooperation, to improve the Commission's Internal coordination in counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism (PVE), with a view of providing a holistic and coordinated response to the scourge;
- (ii) **Full operationalization and activation** of the PSC Sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism; and the operationalize the AU Special Fund on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa, pursuant to Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.614(XXVII)] adopted by the 27th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in July 2016, in Kigali, Rwanda;
- (iii) **Reviewing** the Continental Counterterrorism Framework, to ensure that it responds to the current manifestations and development of the threats of terrorism and violent extremism; and
- (iv) **Accelerating** the change of name of the ACSRT to the African Union Counter Terrorism Centre (AUCTC), and the review of its status and structure, to align the center with international bodies, and improve synergies and further enhance the efficiency of member states in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and addressing the evolving terrorism and violent extremism threat in Africa, as requested by the 36th Ordinary Summit to the commission, in line with the framework of institutional reforms, to undertake the due process and report back to the assembly.

16. ***Underlines the importance*** of national reconciliation and cohesion including through dialogue and negotiations to facilitate voluntary surrender and rehabilitation of terrorists and extremists, and to this end, ***requests*** the AU Commission, through the ACSRT, to develop a compendium of African national reconciliation best practices to be submitted for consideration by Council, as soon as possible; requests the AU Commission through the ACSRT and other relevant agencies to institute an annual roundtable on the alternative approaches countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, tapping into the expertise local actors;
17. ***Encourages*** Member States to collaborate in developing and implementing effective counter-narrative strategies, including those relating to foreign terrorist fighters; closely monitor the use of the internet and social media; develop counter-narratives based on tolerance and nonviolence; as well as to develop a comprehensive continental strategy for effectively countering cyber-crime and cyber-terrorism; and ***tasks*** the ACSRT and AFRIPOL to institute a continental capacity building program to counter the use of cyberspace for terrorism purposes;
18. ***Encourages*** the media to continue promoting the culture of tolerance, diversity and peace in the Continent;
19. ***Further encourages*** Member States to support the efforts of the AU efforts in mobilizing funding, including by endowing the AU Special Fund created for the purpose of strengthening efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism in the Continent and, in this regard, ***appeals*** to Member States to generously make voluntary financial contributions and to provide technical support to AU efforts against terrorism and violent extremism;
20. ***Further urges*** the partners, on the basis of priorities defined by the AU, to continue providing support to the efforts against terrorism, banditry, trafficking and trans-national organized crime;
21. ***Looks forward*** to the successful organization of the Counter-terrorism Summit to be jointly organized by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the AU and the United Nations, in April 2024; and
22. ***Decides*** to remain actively seized of the matter.