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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
731ST MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
8 NOVEMBER 2017

PSC/PR/BR. (DCCXXXI)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 731st meeting held on 8 November 2017, to an Open Session on the theme: “The link between terrorism and transnational organized crime”.

Council and participants took note of the opening statements made by the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November 2017, H.E. Ambassador Chérif Mahamat Zene, of the Republic of Chad, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui. Council and participants also took note of the presentations made by the Director of the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), Dr. Tarek Sharif, and the Director of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Larry-Gbevlo Lartey Esq. They further took note of the statements made by the representatives of AU Member States, AU partners, other international institutions and organizations.

Council and participants recalled all previous pronouncements and decisions of the PSC on the fight against terrorism, as well as violent extremism and radicalization. In particular, they recalled Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCXI)] adopted by Council at its 711th meeting held on 22 August 2017; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLXXXVII)] adopted by Council at its 687th meeting held on 23 May 2017; as well as Communiqué [PSC/AHG. COMM. (CDLV)] adopted by Council at its 455th meeting, held on 2 September 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

Council and participants noted with deep concern the increasing direct linkages and collusion between terrorism and transnational organized crime particularly in situations where state institutions are weak and lack the necessary capacity to effectively discharge their constitutional mandates. They also expressed concern over the ability of terrorist organizations to finance their activities by engaging in organized crime activities that include drug and human trafficking, fire arms trafficking, wildlife trafficking, piracy and other forms of transnational organized crimes, including smuggling of cultural goods. In this regard, they underscored the importance of building and further strengthening the capacities of national security agencies of AU Member States, in order to enable them to be more effective in preventing and combating terrorism and transnational organized crime.

Council and participants underscored the importance for Member States to enhance their investments in effective border control and surveillance technologies, including biometric identity documents. They stressed the importance of effective regulation and control of social media, bearing in mind the need to protect basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially freedom of movement. They also stressed the need to improve judicial systems, enhance cooperation between border police and financial intelligence units, as well as to involve civil society and local communities in efforts aimed at preventing and combating terrorism and

transnational organized crime. In this context, they expressed gratitude to all AU partners for their continued capacity building support to the law enforcement agencies of AU Member States.

Council and participants welcomed the progress made in the operationalization of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) and noted with satisfaction, the efforts of AFRIPOL Secretariat in support of the efforts of Member States Police agencies to prevent and combat transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Council and participants underlined the importance of enhanced cooperation between AFRIPOL and Member States. In the same vein, they encouraged the Secretariat of AFRIPOL to work closely with Member States towards the speedy extension of the African Police Information and Communication System (AFSECOM) to all Member States. They commended all Member States, which have already established their own national AFRIPOL liaison offices, and urged all other Member States, which have not yet done so to, to also do the same.

Council and participants emphasized the importance of collective security approaches in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime. In this regard, they underscored the core need for information and intelligence sharing among the relevant security agencies of the Member States. They also stressed the imperative to further strengthening the interface between the various collective security initiatives and arrangements already in place, such as the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the ACRST and AFRIPOL, in order to build effective synergies, which promote and enhance coherence and complementarity, rather than duplication of efforts. Furthermore, they underlined the need for closer cooperation between the AU and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the fight against transnational organized crime.

Council and participants commended all Member States, which have signed and ratified all existing AU and other relevant international instruments on the prevention and combat of terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and transnational organized crime and urged Member States which have not yet done so, to also do the same without further delays.

Council and participants once again, underscored the urgent need to fully activate the PSC Sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism. They also reiterated the urgent need for the operationalization of the AU Special Fund on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa, pursuant to Assembly decision Assembly/AU/Dec.614 (XXVII) adopted during the 27th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Kigali, in July 2016.

Council requested the Commission to urgently prepare and submit to Council, as soon as possible, an updated matrix of status of implementation of all decisions adopted by Council on the prevention and fight against terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and transnational organized crime.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.