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REPORT OF
THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON COUNTER-TERORISM AND RELATED ISSUES

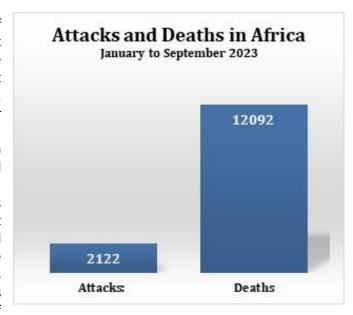**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON COUNTER-TERORISM ANDRELATED ISSUES**

I. INTRODUCTION

1.   Terrorism and Violent Extremism have remained the primary threats to peace, security, national stability, national cohesion, territorial integrity and development on the continent during 2023. The AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and Member States with the support of partners continue to exercise various strategic and operational initiatives at the national, regional, continental and international levels to mitigate the situation. The phenomenon has however, developed into a complex mix of ideology-driven acts of violence, transnational organized crime (TOC) and insurgency. This is manifested in the multiplicity of terrorist and violent extremism groups with varying motives and trajectories that are spreading and unleashing violence across the continent.

2.   Despite these combined efforts of the relevant stakeholders and actors, the terrorism and violent extremism threats continue to mutate with new variants of inter-community massacres, violent conflicts between herders and sedentary farmers and a gradual but persistent expansion into new territories by global Al-Qaeda and Islamic State (Daesh)ideology-oriented Terrorist and Violent Extremist groups who now have presence in all regions of the continent. The threats have remained resolute both in intent and capability, with growing confidence and cohesion in the launching of devastating attacks on civilians, security forces, military installations, and critical infrastructures across the continent. Most worrying is the recent strategy of these groups to launch persistent attacks on military operational and forward bases to kill and capture soldiers as well as seize military equipment for purposes of shoring up their armoury. In the affected areas, the situation undermines the confidence of local populations in the ability of their governments and security forces to protect them against attacks by the terrorist groups.

3.   As a result, local populations in many of the affected areas therefore live in an environment of absolute insecurity, fear, psychological trauma and are often at the mercy of the Terrorist and Violent Extremist groups. Under the circumstances, the expectations of the local communities that government would ensure their peaceful existence tends to be considerably undermined in those areas where the terrorist/violent extremist groups operate. In some local communities, the mere need for survival and self-preservation tends to foster a relationship of mutual support between the community and the terrorist groups. As a result, terrorist groups now occupy and control some portions of national territory in a number of the affected Member States. The terrorist and violent extremist groups in control of such territory, tend to run their own criminal economies in the areas under their control in conjunction with transnational organized criminal networks and the local population is often made to benefit from it. The intricacies of the situation is worrying.

4.   Against this background, a concerted and collaborative approach, involving all relevant stakeholders at all levels of the response generation efforts are required. The overall implication is that the terrorism and violent extremism situation requires a comprehensive, nuanced, and coordinated response at the local, national, and continental levels. The threat keeps changing rapidly and frequently. Understanding the multifaceted drivers and sources of resurgence and resilience of terrorist groups in sustaining the momentum of the groups could culminate into developing tailored made responses to address the threats and achieve enduring peace, security, stability and development in Africa. Consequently, identifying the gaps in CT approaches (both kinetic militaristic and soft approaches) would contribute significantly to prioritising interventions with the aim of reversing the current deteriorating threat levels.

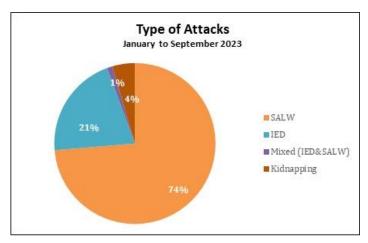**II.** **General Overview and Trends of the Terrorism Threat in Africa**

5. Across the length and breadth of the continent, the perpetration of terrorist acts in all regions continues to be predominantly dominated by local terrorist groups with global worldview orientation, and an affiliation to either Daesh (IS) and/or Al-Qaida. There is a consistent grand strategy of expansion and competition between and/or among the various global terrorist-affiliated groups on the continent. The global world view orientation provides sustained level of support to the terrorist groups in the form of financial and logistical provisions, and also encourages the participation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)with great combat experience. This explains the continues pledging of allegiance and renewal of allegiance to IS Central. For example, IS-Mozambique or Ahlu Sunna Wal' Jamma (ASWJ) in August 2023, renewed its allegiance to **IS'sNew Caliph Abu Hafs al-Hashemi al-Quraishi**. The expertise and the capacity of African terrorist groups with the ability to manufacture and deploy complex improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and deployment of emerging technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV or drones) lend credence to the benefits the groups continue to enjoy from their global networks and affiliation.
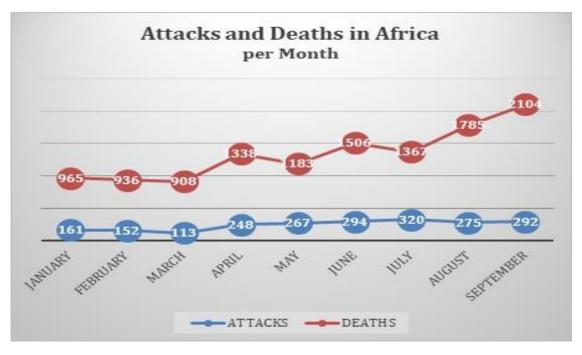
6. It is also important to note that terrorist and violent extremism groups which have not openly declared affiliation to Daesh (IS) or Al-Qaida have also been responsible for a number of the recorded incidents, some of which have undertones of an intent to occupy and control territory in order to facilitate the running of criminal economies. This situation creates operational challenges in the CT/PCVE response generation. This is because, the Member States where some of these groups operate have not officially designated them as terrorist groups, even though their means of attacks and modus operandi conform to terrorist acts as defined in the **1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combatting of Terrorism in Africa.**

7. ***Overall Continental Statistics.*** According to data available in the Africa Terrorism Database, hosted by the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the period from **01 January 2023**to **30 September 2023** recorded **2,122** terrorist attacks resulting in **12,092** deaths across the continent higher than those recorded in the same period in 2022. The 2023 data represents an increase of **95%**and **55%** in the number of attacks and deaths respectively, when compared to same period in 2022. Also, a total of **2,865**people were injured during attacks. In terms of primary targets of attacks, **1,126** of the attacks were against civilian targets, **881**were against military/security targets and installations, **66** were against International Organizations and

deployments while **37** were against Government Officials, Institutions and Infrastructure. In **12** instances terrorist groups clashed among themselves, and in some case civilians suffered fatalities. The records also indicate that **5,592** of the deaths were civilians, **3,178** were military/security personnel, while **3,322** were terrorist fighters killed by security forces during the attacks launched by terrorist groups. In addition to the number of terrorists killed during reprisal attacks by security forces, **5,312** fighters of the various terrorist groups were neutralized during deliberate counter-terrorism operations launched by the military, bringing the total number of terrorist eliminated during the period to **8,534.**

Attacks and Deaths in Africa per Month

Month	Deaths	Attacks
JANUARY	965	161
FEBRUARY	936	152
MARCH	908	113
APRIL	338	248
MAY	183	267
JUNE	506	294
JULY	367	320
AUGUST	1785	275
SEPTEMBER	2104	292

Attacks and Deaths per Region
January to September 2023

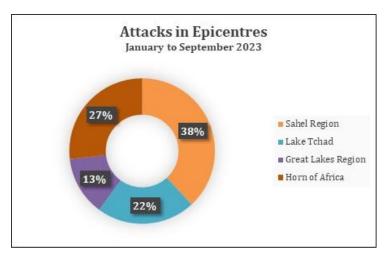| Region	Deaths	Attacks
CENTRAL AFRICA	2545	508
WEST AFRICA	6255	1027
EAST AFRICA	3119	506
SOUTHERN AFRICA	149	68
NORTH AFRICA	24	13

8.   *Regional Overview*. At the regional level, **West Africa** recorded the highest number of terrorist attacks. The region recorded **1,027** attacks that resulted in **6,255** deaths. **Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria** and **Togo** were the countries in which the attacks occurred in the region with Burkina Faso experiencing a rather exponential increase in the number of attacks during the period. Next to West Africa, the **East Africa** region which recorded **508** attacks that resulted in **3,119** deaths. Countries that accounted for the attacks and deaths were **Kenya, Somalia, and Uganda**. **Central Africa** recorded **506** terrorist attacks resulting in **2,545** deaths. These attacks and deaths occurred in the **Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad** and **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Southern Africa** recorded **68** attacks that resulted in **149** deaths. All the terrorist acts recorded in the Southern Africa region occurred in the Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces in the North of **Mozambique**. **North Africa** recorded **13** terrorist attacks and **24** deaths which occurred in **Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania**, and **Tunisia**.

9.   *Modus Operandi Of Terrorist Groups.* Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) have remained the primary weapon of choice by terrorist groups for their attacks. SALW accounted for more than **70%** of the attacks and more than **75%** of deaths recorded. Notwithstanding, the use of all forms of improvised explosive devices especially Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs), remote-controlled IEDs (RCIEDs), human strapped suicide bombs or Personal Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIEDs)as well as Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG) has reached an alarming level of proportionality. IEDs were used extensively on mobility corridors to restrict the movement of both security forces and civilians, to the extent of impacting access to humanitarian aid in many terrorism-torn zones. Terrorist groups all over the continent have developed technical capabilities in the deployment and use of IEDs to launch sophisticated attacks. This capability demonstrates transfer of technologies, technical know-how and expertise among terrorist groups as well as participation of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) with combat experience on the technical manufacturing of IEDs. The various terrorist groups are now known to be producing explosive materials from fertilizers and other ingredients instead of relying on military grade explosives which have become increasingly difficult to obtain. Kidnapping was also a major tactic that the terrorist groups on the Continent employed during the period. Indeed, Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) remains one of the primary sources through which terrorist groups have sought to finance their activities.

10.   *Most Affected Countries and Brutal Terrorist Groups*. The five most affected countries in terms of the number of attacks and the resultants fatalities recorded during the reporting period are **Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Nigeria,** and **Somalia**. These countries recorded **1,305** attacks out of **2,122** total attacks and **10,416** deaths out of a total of **12,092** deaths accounting for **62%** and **86%** of continental attacks and deaths respectively. In terms of brutality of terrorist groups, **Al-Shabaab** operating in the Horn of Africa and **Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM)** or **Group for the Support of Islam and Muslim (GSIM)** which operates in the Sahel region, both of which an Al-Qaida affiliate terrorist groups dominated the terrorism landscape on the continent during the reporting period. The two groups accounted for almost **50%** of all attacks and **40%** of fatalities recorded on the continent. They exhibited great capabilities in the planning and launching of attacks against their targets particularly security forces. As a result, several of the most fatal terrorism incidents recorded were carried out by the two groups. Al-Shabaab currently provides technical support to JNIM on the manufacturing and deployment of IEDs.

III.   CONTINENTAL TERRORISM THREAT ASSESSMENT

11.   An overview of the activities of the major terrorist groups in Africa during the period under review tends to support the assertion that despite the counter-terrorism strategies deployed against the groups, they continue to maintain considerable momentum. A bird's eye view of the activities of

the major terrorist groups currently operating on the continent during the year is sectioned under the various epicentres of terrorist activities and as follows:

Attacks in Epicentres
January to September 2023

- Sahel Region
- Lake Tchad
- Great Lakes Region
- Horn of Africa

12. *Sahel Belt of West Africa.* The security situation in the Sahel remains fragile and characterized by incessant terrorist attacks and ethnic tensions. The region recorded **720** attacks and resultant deaths of **4,587**. **Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM)** and **Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS),** both Salafi-Terrorist terrorist groups affiliated to Al-Qaida and IS (Da'esh) respectively dominated the terrorism landscape in the Sahel region. While virtually pursuing the ideology of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the two groups continue to operate in Mali and across the border in both Burkina Faso and Niger. They have accomplices in two other terrorist groups, the Macina Liberation Front (MLF) and Ansarul Islam which also operate from Mali and Burkina Faso respectively. The tri-border area of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger referred to as the *Liptako-Gourma* remained the most heavily affected, and accounted for more than 60% of all terrorism activities within the Sahel enclave. The Liptakp-Gourma area covers Gao and Ansongo regions of Mali; Oudalan, Seno and Soum provinces of Burkina Faso and Tillaberi region of Niger. In all, JNIM carried out **490** attacks that resulted in **2,140** deaths, whilst ISGS carried out **130** attacks that resulted in **627** deaths. The operations of the 2 groups in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger exemplify the situation.

   a. *Burkina Faso*. During the period, Burkina Faso experienced a sharp increase in terror attacks. The country can conveniently be classified as the epicentre of terrorism and violent extremism not only in the Sahel region, but the entire continent. The Terrorist groups attacked villages and resorted to attacking isolated security forces outposts and ambushing reinforcements sent to support these outposts when under attack. In addition to the Liptako-Gourma area, the attacks were mainly in the North Central, Southeast, and Southwest parts of the country and in particular Bam, Loroum, Namentenga, Sanmentenga, Yatenga, Gourma, Boulgou, Koulpelogo, and Poni. Terrorist attacks have become more complex and sophisticated. On 17 February, suspected ISGS militants ambushed a military convoy between Deou and Oursi in Oudalan Province, near the border with Mali. The incident led to the death of at least 70 soldiers while security forces in a reprisal attack killed about 60 of the assailants. Similarly, about 86 people comprising soldiers, civilians and terrorists died in Ouahigouya commune in Yatenga province in an attack perpetrated by JNIM on 15 April. On 04 September, JNIM attacked a position of soldiers and volunteer fighters (VDP) in the town of Koumbri, Yatenga province and killed17 soldiers and 36 VDP. These attacks and many others that followed resulted in the high fatalities in the country for the period. The situation has forced the Government to deploy community auto defense groups whose activities are sometimes violating the fundamental human rights of local population, making them further vulnerable to the cause of extremist groups' appeals. Burkina Faso urgently requires assistance to avoid being use as a launchpad to destabilize the entire West Africa region, in particular coastal states.

b. *Mali*. The security crisis remains deleterious. Apart from the tri-border area that the country shares with Burkina Faso and Niger, Central and Northern Mali regions of Bankass, Douentza, Koro, Mopti, and Timbuktu remain the most hard hit by terrorism. Fighting between ISGS and JNIM resurged, and Civilians paid the price as terrorist activities flares up. Despite the extensive counter terrorism operations by the Malian Armed Forces (FaMA) which have disrupted terrorist activities, the groups continue to exhibit great momentum to launch devastating attacks. On 10 April, ISGS took over Tidermène town in Ménaka region while on 22 April, JNIM fighters claimed responsibility for an attack on a military base and the airport in the central Malian town of Sévaré, using Suicide Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (SVBIEDs) that killed three soldiers and 10 civilians. On 07 September, JNIM militants attacked a passenger boat and bamba military camp, killing at least 49 civilians and 15 soldiers in Nzorkoy, Timbuktu while security forces also killed at least 50 militants in reprisal attack. The next day, JNIM killed 37 FaMA soldiers near the Gao Airport. For the Period, MINUSMA suffered heavy attacks from the terrorist groups resulting in the deaths and injuries to peacekeepers. At the request of the Malian Transitional Government, the UN Security Council on 30th June 2023 unanimously adopted Resolution 2690 (2023), terminating the mandate of MINUSMA by ceasing its operations, transferring its tasks, and withdrawing personnel by 31st December 2023. Already MINUSMA has pulled-out from key towns and announced in October a pulled-out of camps in Kidal and Tessalit airport manned by Chadian soldiers. The anticipated departure of MINUSMA has complicated and worsened the security environment in Mali as the implementation of the 2015 Algiers Accord has been halted. As a result, hostilities between the Malian Army and the 2015 Algiers Accord signature groups, namely – the Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP) and the Coordination of Azawad Movement (CMA) have resumed. The CMA and the mother CSP have both declared war with the Malian authority and have subsequently attack Malian Army military personnel including shooting down an army aircraft. This resumption of hostilities further complicates the security risks.

c. *Niger.* Due to its geographical location, Niger is exposed to terrorism and other trans-border criminal activities on multiple fronts. While JNIM and its affiliates generate insecurity at the border with Mali and Burkina Faso, Boko Haram and ISWAP carry out repeated attacks on Nigerien territory along the frontier with Nigeria particularly in the Diffa region. The ISGS has a stronghold in the Tillabéri region of Niger from where it launches attacks against both Niger and Malian security forces. The ISGS stepped up its attacks in South-West (Tillabery) located within the Liptako-Gourma tri-border area. On 10 February, 17 soldiers were killed by ISGS in Banibangou, Tillaberi close to the Malian Border. Other departments attacked include Tera, Tahoua, and Maradi. For instance, ISGS attacked a refugee's camp at Tillia located in Tahoua close to the border with Mali and Burkina Faso and killed 18 Civilians. More recently, on 28 September, ISGS militants attacked soldiers in Kandadji village located in Tillaberi region, and killed 12 soldiers, injured seven others and damaged four vehicles. Security forces in reprisal attack killed about s 100 militants. The political instability following the coup d'état has caused resurgence of terrorist activities in the 3rd quarter of 2023. On 26 July Presidential Guards, led by **General Abdourahamane Tiani**, overthrown Niger's democratically elected **President Mohamed Bazoum.** The political instability has the tendency to worsen terrorism and violent extremism situation in Niger, the Liptako-Gourma area and the Sahel region as a whole.

13.   *Coastal States of West Africa*. The terrorism threat level in coastal West Africa continues to deteriorate. The deteriorating security situation in Burkina Faso continues to trigger militant encroachment southwards into coastal States of West Africa, particularly in Northern Benin and Northern Togo. In Poni, a district in Burkina Faso that borders Cote d'Ivoire witnessed increased attacks while Koulpelogo province continue to witness increasing attacks closer to the frontier with

Ghana. The rapid development now leaves Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana on high alert against possible attacks. Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo experienced increased number of displaced persons fleeing terrorist attacks and counter terrorism operations in Burkina Faso. This situation is creating a high national security risk as some of the local populations are reportedly crossing into these countries with their cattle. Under the circumstances, the full operationalization and implementation of the Accra Initiative (AI), particularly the anticipated deployment of MNJTF/AI, following the decision of the Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Member States of the AI, held on 22 November 2022, organized as part of the international conference on the AI could be beneficial. The implementation of the summit decisions could prove strategically, operationally, and tactically relevant in nipping the terrorism threats in the bud.

a. _Benin._ Terrorist attacks, mostly by JNIM and ISGS militants have been centred in the northern regions of Benin namely, the Atakora and Alibori departments. These departments consistently experienced terrorist attacks within the reported period. For example, Suspected JNIM militants attacked Kerou community within Atakora department and killed at least 15 civilians and kidnapped 12 others. The incessant terrorist attacks have expanded from targeting defence forces to planting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on roads, and assaulting civilians. These attacks have disrupted normal daily subsistence activities by the local population, which have compelled some to relocate down south of the country. In all, there were **46** attacks during the period, resulting in over **78** deaths.

b. _Togo_. Towards the mid of 2022, terrorist groups extended their activities to the Eastern border region of Burkina Faso along the frontiers with Togo. Subsequently between 10 and 11 May 2022, suspected JNIM militants attacked a Togolese military outpost located in Kpekpakandi within the Northern Savanes region, a few kilometres away from neighbouring Burkina Faso and killed eight (08) soldiers. This was the first terrorist attack in Togo. Since then, the situation further deteriorated in the Northern Savanes region particularly in the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2023. So far, between May 2022 that Togo recorded its first attack and October 2023, more than **15** attacks have been recorded, resulting in the deaths of **114** people including **51**soldiers. This year, two attacks in the villages of Tolga and Gninga resulted in the deaths of many soldiers and civilians. On 10February 2023, suspected JNIM militants attacked the Tola village, located within the northern Savanes region, killing at least 31 civilians in what appears to be the deadliest terrorist attack in Togo to date. The worsening security situation compelled the Togolese parliament to extend the State of Emergency in the northern region of Savanes for 12 months on 6 April, with the aim to help prevent incursions by terrorist groups operating across the Togo-Burkina Faso border. The initiative was first implemented in June 2022. Prior to the State of Emergency, the country recorded multiple attacks around the Savanes region. The initiative has given security forces more flexibility, thus contributed to reduction in the number attacks during the 3rd quarter of 2023.

14.   _Lake Chad Basin_. The region recorded **414** attacks, leading to **1,787** deaths higher than those recorded in same period in 2022. Al-Qaida affiliate group, **Boko Haram** _and_ its breakaway IS affiliate group **Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)** continue to dominate the terrorism landscape in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. At the operational level, both groups continue to demonstrate considerable momentum, cohesion, capability and a will to face the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the efforts of the latter to stabilize the region. While both groups continued to launch limited terrorist attacks in the South-East of Niger (Diffa region) and South-Western Chad, their major areas of operation within the period have been in the North-Eastern Nigerian States of _Borno_ and Far-North Region of Cameroon. The ACSRT database recorded **183**attacks by Boko Haram and **170** by ISWAP resulting in **383** and **353** deaths respectively. Admittedly, the operations of the MNJTF have considerably reduced the momentum of both groups and lowered the

number of their attacks on civilian targets. Attacks on the Security Forces such as raids on military camps have however increased. Appropriate schemes of manoeuvre will need to be evolved to protect deployed troops in order to sustain their morale. While Boko Haram mostly targets civilians, they also do carry out attacks against military deployments. ISWAP's main target has however been the security forces. The modus operandi of ISWAP indicates that it seeks to demoralize the deployed troops and win the hearts and minds of local populations by demonstrating that it is the group that could be relied upon for protection and provision of services to them. In all, it would appear that more attention needs to be paid to supporting the MNJTF with the required finances and budgetary support, logistics, equipment and technical operational intelligence in order to further enhance the momentum of their operations and regain control of territory and communities that are currently dominated by Boko Haram or ISWAP.

a. *Cameroon.* Terrorism and Violent Extremism activities have resurged in Cameroon, in particular the Far-North region. Boko Haram and ISWAP continue to generate insecurity in the Far North region, as local communities have become more vulnerable to terrorist attacks and civilian population continue to bear the brunt of the resultant fatalities. The use of IEDs have become rampant, further worsening and threating the living condition of communities. An IED attack by Boko Haram on 21 March 2023 between the towns of Kolofata and Amchide, southwest of the Cameroon-Nigeria border killed 10 soldiers. The resurgence of Boko Haram and ISWAP attacks particularly in the Mayo-Tsanaga and Mayo-Sava divisions of the Far-North region could be attributed to three main reasons. First, the enhanced counterterrorism (CT) operationsbythe Sector 3 MNJTF in northeastern Nigeria have pushed the group across the Frontier that Nigeria share with Cameroon. Second, The in-fighting between Boko Haram and ISWAP and the desire for ISWAP to push BokoHaram completely from the area have further compunded the situation. Third, the withdrawal of some contingentes fromthe Sector 1 MNJTF to contain the security situation in the South-West and North-West Anglophone regions, following the increasimg atrocities of the Ambazonia Separatists Fighters have created security vacum from which terrorist groups are exploiting.The armed separatist group continued to carry out attacks in the southwest and northwest regions of the country and have also begun the deployment of IEDs against security forces. In the latest attack, Ambazonian Separatist fighters detonated an IED on a military convoy killing at least two civilians and injured five others including soldiers on 05 September, at Alou, South-West. Also, three civilians were killed in Kumbo, Northwest and another three killed in Mueag, Southwest on 03 September and 06 September respectively by Ambazonian Separatist Fighters. To prevent further resurgence attacks, the Cameroon Army has deployed troops to areas where separatists, terrorists and rebels operate.

b. *Chad*. Terrorism related activities within Chad have completely been kept at bay, while violent extremism incidents have surged. The sector 2 MNJTF has completely reduced the activities of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lac province. Cases of Boko haram and ISWAP attacks have become rare. The most significant Boko haram attack within the period was when the group beheaded four civilians its kidnapped-on 05 August after their families refused to pay ransom for their release. However, violent extremism activities are high and along its borders with Libya, Sudan, and Central African Republic. In May, the Chadian army dismantled positions of the Front de la Nation pour la Démocratie et la Justice au Tchad (FNDJT) and the Council of Military Command for the Salvation of the Republic (CCMSR) rebel groups in the Kouri Bougoudi region. Everything indicates that these rebel groups were behind the many attacks against civilians. 23 rebels were killed in the operation. These new attacks, if not dislodged could over time develop into entrenched insurgencies and could be difficult to control. The Chadian army further launched a series of counter insurgency operations against Libya-based Chadian Front for Change and Concord (FACT), which quit a ceasefire in August2023.

c. _Nigeria._ ISWAP and Boko Haram continued to operate and control territory in the Northeast Nigeria states of Borno, Yobe, Adawama and Taraba, despite suffering major setbacks from the MNJTF counter-terrorism operations. Boko Haram conducted a significant number of attacks against civilian populations in local communities within the north-eastern states. There is, however, a lull in terrorist activities by both ISWAP and Boko Haram in northeastern states, except Borno state which continue to witness increasing terrorism incidents. For example, ISWAP militants ambushed a military food convoy in Borno by detonating a suicide vehicle killing 20 soldiers. ISWAP has also been active in the Northwest and North Central states, where dozens of Bandit groups continued to engage in deadly raids, kidnappings for ransom, and other violent criminal activities. On 02 February, unidentified armed men attacked several villages in the Bakori local community located within the Katsina State, killing at least 102 Civilians. Investigating and understanding the possible mutually beneficial relationships existing between ISWAP and Boko Haram on one hand and the various banditry groups operating in the North-western and North-central states such as Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi and Niger states could potentially help to disrupt sources of financing for terrorist groups. The infighting between the Boko Haram and ISWAP, for control and influence over territory added to the worsening security situation. Despite the MNJTF intensified counter terrorism military operations, the groups remain resilient.

15. _**East and Horn of Africa.**_ The Horn of Africa experienced a surge in terrorism and violent extremism activities. The region recorded **505** attacks and **3,075** deaths. This represents an increase of more than 200% in attacks and 180% in deaths in the Horn of Africa when compared to same period 2022. The Al-Qaida affiliate terrorist group, al-Shabaab continues to dominate the terrorism landscape in East Africa and operates mainly in Somalia and Kenya. During the period, the group carried out **501** attacks which killed **2,390** persons. The Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), also known as **Abna Ul-Calipha** is an IS-affiliate group that operates in the Puntland region of Somalia also remains active in the region. During the period, its activities were restricted to a number of targeted killings of government officials. Airstrikes conducted by US AFRICOM against the group have been very effective in disrupting their activities and killing its leaders. On 26 January, U.S Africa Command (AFRICOM) commandos killed a senior ISS leader, Bilal al-Sudani, in an early morning helicopter raid in a remote area of northern Somalia. The death of Bilal al-Sudani is expected to cause a major hitch in the terrorism financing network of not only ISS but also other IS wilayas including IS-Mozambique/ASWJ and ISCAP/ADF. Al-Sudani headed the Islamic State's Al-Karrar regional office which is in charge of the Sub-Saharan Africa provinces, and their affairs and provides a bridge beyond Africa. The ISS has propped itself as a major player in the coordination of and facilitation of the IS-Central affairs in many parts of Africa.

a. _Kenya_. Despite the enhanced counter terrorism operation by Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) against al-Shabaab, the country recorded considerable number of atrocities against civilian population, security forces and critical infrastructure installations. Kenya recorded **60%** increase in the number of terrorist attacks when compared to same period 2022. Eastern Kenya counties of Lamu, Mandera, Garissa and Wajir experienced attacks attributed to al-Shabaab, primarily in the form of IED attacks targeting Kenyan security forces. In the Northern Kenya Coast, al-Shabaab is believed to have a base in the Boni forest, from which it launches attacks to other parts of eastern Kenya. Security forces bore the brunt of the militants' attacks, as **97** out of the **130** deaths were soldiers and police officers. For instance, on 14 February 2023, four police officers were killed when the vehicle they were travelling in ran over an IED in Garissa. Similarly, three soldiers were killed in Gabi Districts located in Mandera County by Al-Shabaab militants on 22 February 2023. On**09 September,** an IED planted by Al-Shabaab detonated, targeting Kenya Defense Forces convoy in the Buure area along the Milimani Buure in Lamu, killing at least 10 soldiers and injured 4 others. Even though the group carried out

sporadic attacks across the various operational corridors, the lethality of attacks reduced in Kenya. Kenya continued to be at the receiving end of retaliatory attacks from Al-Shabaab due to its increasing role in the offensive against Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

b. *Somalia.* The country experienced more than **95%** of total attacks and **96%** of deaths in the region. The capital Mogadishu, Lower and Middle Shebelle, Hiraan, Bay, Gedo, Bekool and Lower and Middle Juba were areas in which most terrorist activities of the group were recorded. Al-Shabaab also maintained pressure in Hirshabelle by raiding clan militia positions, and by attacking civilians accused of supporting government forces and clan militias. During the period, a relatively stable region of *Sanaag*, situated in northeastern Somaliland, recorded an attack. This suggests that Al-Shabaab could be retrieving to newer areas of the operation following revised and robust counter-terrorism operations by the Somalia government where it has joined forces with pro-government clan militias since late 2022. The initiative has increased counter terrorism offensive around Hiraan, Middle Shabelle and Juba regions, and significantly continues to destabilize al-Shabaab and dislodge it from those territories. In recent times especially in the month of September, the group resorted to suicide bombings using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and targeting civilians in high population density areas as well as government offices and security installations. While this tactic reduces the casualty rate of its fighters, it increases, very highly, the casualties inflicted on its targets per attack. However, the recent attack against the Ugandan contingent of ATMIS where Al-Shabaab terrorists stormed the military camp killing more than 50 Ugandan soldiers was one of the complex attacks orchestrated by the group. The attack on the Ugandan Contingent suggests that the group is strategizing and recuperating. Somalia's government is currently running what has been described as the most significant offensive against al-Shabaab extremist group in more than a decade. On 01 February, four Heads of State and Government from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia met in Mogadishu to agree on a final push for joint operations in the areas that remain under the terrorists to completely liberate the whole of Somalia from al-Shabaab, and to prevent any future infiltrating elements into the wider region. The Somali President, H**.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud** announced at the end of March 2023, the second phase of counter-terrorism offensive, which was to focus on southern States of Southwest and Jubaland following the end of first phase that started in August 2022 and focused on Middle States of Hirshabelle and Galmudug. The second phase is expected to consolidate the CT efforts. The greatest persisting challenge in Somalia, however, is the ability of forces to sustain their gains in recaptured areas. While the use of clansmen in countering al-Shabaab's violence seems to be bearing fruits and possibly improving relations with local communities, arming civilians could, in the long run, increase the illicit circulation of weapons and crime against civilians, especially if it is not well monitored. The anticipated drawdown of 2,000 troops by 30 June 2023 as part of ATMIS exit plan by December 2024 began, and several bases were transferred to Somali National Army (SNA). In view of the will and cohesion that al Shabaab continues to project in the conduct of its operations, the anticipated drawdown of AMISOM/ATMIS deployment will necessarily have to take into consideration the capacity buildup and preparedness of the Somalian National Army to sustain the momentum that has been created by AMISOM/ATMIS, SNA and AFRICOM in their operations against al Shabaab. The drawdown of ATMIS troops, if not well planned and executed could spike terrorist attacks, as the security vacuum created could enable al-Shabaab to launch offensives to undermine Somali security forces in new areas taken over.

c. *Uganda.* Uganda faces several terrorism and violent extremism threats both from within and without. During the period, several Uganda interests were attacked both in the country and outside the country. The attacks are direct retaliation of joint military operations of Ugandan People Defense Forces (UPDF) against various terrorist groups in East Africa especially the

Allied Democratic Force (ADF) in eastern DRC and al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa. In October, the Islamic State, through its Central Africa Province (ISWAP) known locally as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) conducted and claimed responsibility for two attacks against civilians in western Uganda. On 17 October, ISCAP/ADF gunmen targeted a tourist safari vehicle as it travelled through Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park in the country's western Kasese District. The attack left three people dead, including a newlywed couple from the United Kingdom and South Africa and their local Ugandan guide. The Queen Elizabeth ambush came a few days after ISCAP/ADF militants attacked a civilian lorry on 13 October, which was carrying vegetables to a local market near Bwera also in Uganda's western Kasese District. The 13 October ambush, which occurred less than 3km from the Congolese border, killed at least one person and at first appeared likely to be a quick cross-border raid, with the assailants retreating back into Congo. The 17 October attack, which occurred nearly 24km southeast of the 13 October ambush, instead indicates that ADF/ISCAP has managed to penetrate at least 26km into Uganda. The group is attempting to re-establish a sustained presence in western Uganda. Prior to these two ambushes, the ISCAP/ADF previously carried out a cross-border raid from eastern Congo into western Uganda. In June 2023, the combatants staged a cross-border raid to the south in the border town of Mpondwe, murdering 37 children and seven adults during a night-time assault on a secondary school before withdrawing back into Congo with several hostages. This indicates that a highly mobile group of combatants opted to stay inside Uganda to carry out more ambushes rather than returning to Congo as during the June massacre in Mpondwe. In September, an intelligence led operation disrupted a planned IED attack on a church in Kampala, the Capital. Operationally, the recent terrorism event share far closer to the traditional insurgent tactics that ADF/ISCAP employs regularly inside DRC, and worryingly, the cross-border insurgency waged by the group twenty years ago. Given past tactical trends, the incursion will likely continue to target civilians, and may ultimately seek to re-establish a sustained guerrilla presence in Uganda's west – all in the name of the Islamic State.

16.   ***Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region***. The Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region continue to register significant increase in attacks triggered by different violent groups, particularly in Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). During the period, the Great Lakes region recorded a total of **249** violent attacks that resulted in **2,085** fatalities. Armed groups continued their attacks in Eastern DRC, while various rebel groups committed atrocities in many parts of CAR against government security forces. The major terrorist group operating in the Great Lakes Region is the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) or Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). The group remains the biggest threat to the region and beyond. A total of **135** attacks were carried out by the group and resulted in the death of **1,059** people.

   a.   ***Central African Republic.*** Several rebel groups, most notably the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC)and the 3R group committed atrocities against government security forces and civilians. For the period under review, CPC rebels launched a new wave of attacks with improved weaponry against the government, raising fears of a return to intense fighting. For example, three Central African Armed Forces (FACA) soldiers were killed in Nguia-Bouar, Nana-Mambere 3R militants on 10 September, while another three were killed in Zombossinda, Bamingui-Bangoran by CPC militants on 21 September. In total, armed rebel groups killed estimated **155** people in various parts of CAR comprising **96** Government Soldiers and **59** Civilians.

   b.   ***Democratic Republic of Congo.*** Eastern DRC was fraught with increased violent incidents, particularly in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces, perpetrated by various armed groups. The groups include the IS affiliated group, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) or Islamic

State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) among others, as well as local violent extremist group including - Congo Development Cooperative (CODECO), Zaire, Movement of 23 March (M23), range of Mai-Mai and other community-based groups. The ADF/ISCAP group carried out most of its attacks in North Kivu province while the CODECO and Zaire militia concentrated attacks around Ituri province. M23 dominated violent extremism activities in South Kivu province. A developing trend of targets against the Christians community was detected. ISCAP continue to ignite anti-Christian sentiments. ISCAP increased the use of IEDs in its attacks. The increasing use of IEDs in the region suggests that experienced Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) are in the area, and ISCAP is fast developing the technical competence of manufacturing and deploying these devices, something that could in the near future change the landscape of the terrorism situation in eastern DRC. Despite the deployment of Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) in the region, the expected improvement in the security situation remains low. The threat in eastern DRC remains tense, sophisticated and complex and atrocities by armed groups could increase in the near future, if adequate measures are not put in place to address the recurrent security challenges. A new inventory carried out by the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Reintegration and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS) indicates that there are about 252 local armed groups, and 14 foreign armed groups are operating in the eastern Provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika, and Maniema. Given the level of threat, the East Africa Community (EAC) extended the mandate of its standby force to September 2023. However, H.E **President Felix Tshisekedi** has heavily criticized the regional bloc's approach towards M23 prompting his request for SADC military intervention in the DRC. Subsequently, the Extraordinary Summit of the SADC Troika and the SADC Organ Troika held in Namibia on 8 May 2023 and approved the deployment of SADC Standby Force (SSF) to restore peace and security in Eastern DRC. The fear is that Eastern DRC is becoming a hotbed of intervening overlapping multidimensional security forces and the complicity of deploying multiple forces could be more detrimental to the DRC; this could be a repeat of Sahel episode if not well coordinated. An alternative approach including political solution as well as dialogue and negotiations with the various armed groups could be explored as a possible means of finding an enduring peace and stability in DRC.

17. _**North Africa and the Maghreb**_. The North Africa and the Maghreb region remained relatively stable. In comparison to the same period in 2022, there was a significant drop in number of attacks and deaths. The continued improvement in the terrorism situation in North Africa and the Maghreb region could be attributed to continuous counter terrorism operations underpinned by enhanced intelligence gathering capabilities of security forces. In many countries, including Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, cells linked to IS were dismantled while some suspected terrorist individuals were arrested. The diminishing control by ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups and failure to sustain cells due to robust counter-terrorism operations has considerably improved the terrorism situation. The improving security situation is North Africa suggests that global terrorist networks, which had active cells operating across North African countries, have focused their attention on Sub-Saharan Africa where weaker security measures are rampant. Government-led de-radicalization programs and other initiatives such as enhanced monitoring of mosques and madrassas, churches and places of worships, intensified intelligence gathering, and cross-border information sharing could further sustain the gains in the region.

a. _**Algeria**_. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) continue to pose relative threats to Algeria. However, the continued CT operations in the southern part of the country have kept terrorism sustainably at bay. An Army patrol team clashed with suspected AQIM militants during a counter terrorism operation in Ain Al Ksira near Bordj Emir Abdelkader. One soldier was killed in the process. The recent upsurge in the activities of terrorism in the Sahel is considered a

major threat for the country, hence the need to intensify intelligence sharing among bordering countries. Intensifying the border monitoring of the movement of armed groups between the South and West of Libya and the Sahel for purposes of interception could further degrade the capability of these groups to launch cross-border attacks in Algeria from the Sahel region.

b. _Egypt_. A local terrorist group that pledged allegiance to IS (Daesh) continued to dominate the terrorism landscape, particularly in the Sinai Peninsula which recorded **10**attacks that resulted in **16** deaths. A counter-terrorism offensive launched by the Egyptian Army has however reduced the capability and cohesion of the terrorist groups in the Sinai considerably, and as a result the security situation has improved and stabilised in the Sinai Peninsula. The military counter terrorism offensives since the beginning of the year have yielded positive results and kept terrorism out of the region with few recorded incidents of low intensity and lethality. An IED planted by suspected Islamic state militants exploded south of Bir Al-Abd, Sinai killing a child and injuring at least two other civilians. At least four security personnel were killed on 30 July at El Arish in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. A group of detainees seized weapons inside El Arish's Central Security compound and attacked forces stationed there. Six people were also wounded. It should be noted that the Egyptian government has recently heavily invested a lot of resources in the Sinai Peninsula, especially the construction and establishment of infrastructures, including electrical, residential and tourism infrastructures, with the aim of benefiting the residents of the area, who have suffered for many years from neglect, and thereby alienating elements that support ISIS, who took advantage of the situation and the accumulated frustration of the local population for taking over the area. While the atmosphere of optimism of the Egyptian government following its achievements against terrorists in the Sinai is reasonable, cautious must be exercised on the commitment of victory. Intelligence and counterintelligence CT operations must be enhanced in the region to avoid resurgence as witnessed in 2022. Sustaining the current momentum will require a whole of society approach including building community resilience to extremist narratives.

c. _Libya._ Terrorism activities of the various IS affiliated groups remained relatively low. The security situation in Southern Libya however, remained unsafe and it continues to serve as a haven to which terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region are able to withdraw to, refit, regroup and launch their attacks in the Sahel Region. The ongoing belligerence between the Government of National Unity (GNA) and the Libya National Army (LNA) has subsumed and derailed efforts to address the terrorism phenomenon in Libya and its repercussion on the situation in the Sahel region and neighbouring countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Chad even to Sudan. For example, Southern Libya-based Chadian Front for Change and Concord (FACT), have found a haven from where it continuous to launch attack against civilians and security forces in Chad. The LNA, however launched counter offensive attack against the group in August. Similarly, a **leader of the terrorists group Islamic State (EI), the planner and sponsor of three deadly attacks in 2018 in the capital Tripoli, has been captured by GNA forces in October.** The operation was carried out jointly by the Radaa (Deterrence) Force and the Rahbat al-Dourou (Shields) Brigade from Tajoura (an eastern suburb of Tripoli).

d. _Mauritania._ No terrorist attacks have been recorded on Mauritanian soil since 20 December 2011, when a gendarme, Ely Ould Mokhtar, was kidnapped in the town of Adel Bagrou on the border with Mali by armed men suspected to be AQIM militants. Unfortunately, after a decade of sustained CT operation and intelligence, the country recorded one attack in March 2023. Four Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) terrorists, who were imprisoned at the Central Prison in Nouakchott, escaped after attacking National Guards on duty on 05 March 2023. The attack resulted in an exchange of gun fire between the guards and the terrorists. Two members of the National Guards were killed during the exchange, while two others were slightly injured. However, the Mauritania Elite Unit of the National Gendarmerie, supported

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by the First Commando Battalion, and the Mauritanian Military Airforce, killed three terrorists who escaped from the Prison on 11 March 2023 at Al-Maddah, Lamasidi area Adrar state. The attack completely changed the national security dynamics and terrorism situation of the country and considerably altered the terrorism threat level. The well-coordinated efforts of the Mauritanian security forces coupled with the intelligence-based manner in which the search operations were conducted, leading to the deaths of the three fugitives, portends a positive development in the fight against terrorism. Given its geographic location to the Sahel region, where terrorism is a continuous threat, Mauritania cannot consider itself totally immune to the expansionist trend of terrorist groups. Terrorist and violent extremist groups in the Sahel in recent times appear to be executing a grand strategy of geographical expansion into new areas beyond their originally operated theatres. Terrorist and violent extremist groups in the Sahel have become more organized and resilient, particularly the JNIM affiliated groups. The country must, therefore, continue to consolidate its capacity, share its experience, and contribute to the Sahel regional stabilization plan and strategy. Enhancing cross-border surveillance and cooperation, as well as intensifying intelligence sharing among neighbouring countries could prove helpful to Mauritania under the circumstances.

e. _**Tunisia.**_ Terrorism in Tunisia remained relatively low and stabilized except a single attack that was staged on a synagogue. In May 2023, a National Naval Guard Officer attacked El Ghriba Synagogue. The attacker, who was stationed at the National Guard Naval Centre in the port town of Aghir on Djerba, first attacked his colleague and took his ammunition. He then headed to the El Ghriba Synagogue, where he fired indiscriminately at security units near the synagogue. The attack resulted in the death of five people comprising, two security officers, two civilians and the attacker. Security forces could however not ascertain the motive behind the attack. Generally, Tunisia's main security threats are residual terrorism and social discontent. The terrorism threats to the country stem from returning Islamic State militants from Libya, Syria, and Iraq as well as Al-Qaeda's affiliate- Katibat Uqba Ibn-Nafi (KUIN) and ISIS branch in Tunisia. About 6,000 terrorists joined ISIL as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) from Tunisia and the IS fighters are known to have active cells within the country. While it has avoided any major violence, low–level assaults have been undertaken by violent extremists, mostly on security personnel in the past years. In addition, the mountainous areas of Kasserine and Kef are infested with small groups of extremists who occasionally conduct periodic attacks, especially on security personnel. The residual terrorism threat in Tunisia is driven by the diminishing control of ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups, and the failure to sustain cells due to robust counter terrorism operations by Tunisia Security Forces that have occasioned the dismantling of cells and arrests of suspected terrorists. Given the historical trend of attacks against vulnerable targets and the importance of tourism in the country, the security forces must enhance their capacity in protecting vulnerable targets that include places of worship, touristic venues, hotels, special events, such occasions, open spaces, among many others as part of counter terrorism response generation efforts and operations.

18. **Northern Mozambique.** The Al Sunnah Wal Jammah (ASWJ) or Islamic State Mozambique (IS-M), continues to generate insecurity in Southern Africa, particularly Northern Mozambican provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Nampula. The operational ideology of ASWJ is to establish an Islamic Caliphate in Cabo Delgado by undermining and degrading the Mozambican government's military and political authority, gaining local support, and combating foreign interests. While the initial motive of the group was advocating some local grievances, the focus of the group has changed following its pledge of allegiance and affiliation to ISIS (Da'esh). In June 2019, following concurrent pledging of allegiance to ISIS, the ADF and ASWJ was put together and declared as IS's Central Africa Wilayat, and was named as Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISWAP). However, following command and control disagreements between ADF and ASWJ leaders, ASWJ requested to ISIS to be granted an independent

status. Subsequently in May 2022, ASWJ was declared Wilayat Mozambique and report directly to ISIS. Since then, IS-core has continuously provided ideological and operational guidance to the group. ADF/ISCAP and IS-Somalia also offer guidance and technical support including training, logistical support and exchange of fighters. In August 2023, ASWJ renewed its allegiance to Islamic State (IS) new Caliph Abu Hafs al-Hashemi al-Quraishi. Between January 2023 and September 2023, the group has conducted **65** attacks resulting in the death of **120** people. While incidences reduced in the 2nd quarter, the 3rd witnessed increased and sophisticated attacks against security forces. At least 10 soldiers were killed in Macomia district on 01 July; seven police officers were killed in Mocímboa da Praia district on 07 July; six soldiers were killed in Macomia district on 08 July; also, nine soldiers died in Macomia district on 01 August, while another seven were killed in Catupa Forest on 08 August. On 22 August ASWJ attack killed nine soldiers in Quiterajo village, whereas 11 Christians were killed in Mocimboa da Praia district on 14 September. ISIS-central continue to feature footage of attacks and claimed responsibility for attacks in Mozambique, in its Al-Naba magazine. While ASWJ has in the past focused its attacks against civilian targets, seemingly the group has shifted its modus operandi gearing toward winning the hearts and minds of the population in local communities. Counter-terrorism operations in Cabo Delgado have dislodged terrorists from some of their strongholds around coastal districts of Palma and Macimboa da Praia. However, terrorists attacked districts such as Montepuez, a relatively stable inland district bordering Niassa province, Maidumbe district; and coastal districts including Macomia, Macimboa da Praia and Palma, and Montepuez all within the Cabo Delgado province and Chipene and Mazua in Memba District, Nampula Province. The attacks confirm a new pattern of violence that is shifting inland away from coastal districts, which were previously designated hotspots and currently have a high presence of military forces. Despite the CT operations, ASWJ remains a major threat to peace and stability in Northern Mozambique, especially in Cabo Delgado Province, with possible spill over effects to neighbouring countries and the southern Africa region in general. ASWJ targets recruits from Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Kenya, Somalia, and neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabweas well as other parts of the region, especially through exploiting online social media platforms. More than 50 recruits, mainly young people, who were promised employment by ASWJ were intercepted enroute Cabo Delgado between February and September 2023. Thus, there is need for Joint security forces to design deliberate efforts, including security spot checks of public transport and merchandise trucks to curtail the movement of recruits to strongholds in Cabo Delgado Province.

IV.   EMERGING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA

19.   The causal factors of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa have been viewed as multi-faceted and extremely diverse phenomena making it difficult to be predicted by one particular variable. For terrorist groups and violent extremist movements to develop and fester, and for individuals to join these movements and groups, they require an alignment of situational, political, social, economic, and individual factors. Although political and economic factors such as governance deficit, state failure, political exclusion, marginalization, low employment resulting in lack of trust between government and the citizenry play significant role in the emergence, development, and escalation of TVE, social and psychological factors bothering on identity are key variables. These factors serve as root causes exploited by terrorist groups to justify their distrust of governments. The prevalence of weak institutions, porous borders, inadequately trained and ill-equipped security forces, historical grievances, and lack of economic opportunities have created conditions for extremist ideologies to grow and fester. These are often worsened by governance challenges and violation of human rights even in the attempt to address and/or contain the existence and spread of terrorist activities. In past reports, these existing factors have been thoroughly presented and discussed. This report, however, presents emerging factors shaping and sustaining the terrorism threats on the continent for the period under review.

20.   ***Sustained Financing of Terrorism***. Terrorist and violent extremist groups need to generate funds to cover operational costs associated with actual terrorist attacks, including purchasing weapons, intelligence gathering, training, transportation, and material costs. Across the continent, despite the measures instituted to cut financial and logistical flow to terrorists, the group continue to have access to huge sources of financing to carry out their operations. Majority of these sources are noted to be outside the formal financial or baking systems and continue to use Hawala systems, kidnapping for ransom, bank robberies and taxation of farmers and fishers. Evidence on the use of emerging technologies such as mobile financial technologies (FinTechs) and virtual currencies such as Crypto-Currency and Bitcoins are increasingly becoming alarming. Capabilities on disrupting these financial flows will have to be developed.

21.   ***Technological Trends***. The internet continues to be used as a conduit by terrorist group for the dissemination of propaganda, radicalization, recruitment and training. The benefits of the internet have instigated access to information and effortless communication, which the terrorist and violent extremist groups exploit as a reliable means to deliver their propaganda for purposes of recruitment and radicalization, disseminating information, training of personnel, for accumulation, movements and storing of funds as well as planning operations. Emerging technologies such as Drones, artificial intelligence, machine learning, deep learning technologies such as deep fake videos are increasing being used on the continent for propaganda and deep state disinformation campaigns. Deepfakes, the technology used by cybercriminals, are becoming increasingly popular and are sometimes used by certain entities to spread misinformation and propaganda. **The Chairperson of the AUC H.E Moussa Faki became a victim of deepfake in October 2023, where fraudsters faked his voice and placed several video calls to European capitals, ostensibly seeking to arrange meetings.** Africa-based terrorist groups are increasingly embracing drones for surveillance purposes, propaganda launching and conducting IED targeted attacks. ISWAP is reportedly using drones to shoot propaganda videos and surveillance against Nigerian forces while in Somalia Al-Shabaab is purportedly using drones for surveillance and launching attacks. The potential use of drone for possible cross border attacks has become increasingly concern. To address this growing concern, States could develop UAV management mechanisms to oversee the procurement as well as deployment of these devices.

22.   **The Impact of Ongoing Conflict on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa.** The ongoing conflict in Sudan could become detrimental to peace and security in the continent. Sudan borders three terrorism hotspot regions of the Sahel, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. Hence, an unstable Sudan could open yet another gateway to the illicit movement of goods and persons including terrorists, weapons, and ammunitions to and from East, Central and North Africa, and has the potential to exacerbate terrorism and violent extremism across the continent. The anticipated proliferation of weapons emanating from arming belligerents could bare a wider regional outreach involving arming non-state actors operating in neighbouring countries of Libya, Chad, Egypt, the DRC, Central Africa Republic, and Kenya. The instability in Sudan could provide a conducive environment for global terrorist groups to infiltrate the country through existing armed groups, in particular, the Islamic State which has adopted an aggressive expansionist approach in Africa, consolidating by that its reach and presence across the wider Sahel Belt, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. The deteriorating security situation in Sudan already provokes conflict-induced displacement, which could make people vulnerable to terrorist recruitment and radicalization by groups operating in neighboring countries.

23.   **Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism**. There is a growing manifestation by Non-State Armed Groups (NAGs) of a complex mix of the crave for territorial control for ideological and socio-economic purposes through the use and threat of violence against state security forces and civilians. There is also the observation that these NAGs tend to link up with transnational organized crime networks to sustain livelihood in the areas that they control for mutual

benefit. The issue of transnational organized crime network groups is at the bottom of many terrorist acts that continue to be committed in many parts of the continent.

V.   EFFORTS OF THE AU COMMISSION TO PREVENT AND COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM.

24.   ***Operational CT Deployments.*** Across the continent, Member States and regional bodies have continued to review and adopt series of counter-terrorism measures including field deployments to deal with the threats of violent extremism and terrorism. These deployments have contributed to degrading the capacities of terrorist group to a greater extent. The reporting period witnessed sustained kinetic counter terrorism (CT) operations. The CT deployment forces across the continent achieved some notable successes amidst operational and logistical challenges. Defense and Security forces also faced persistent push back from terrorist groups during deliberate CT operations for the period. In all, **5,312** terrorists were neutralized in deliberate CT operations, in addition to the **3,322** killed in reprisal attacks during attacks perpetrated by terrorist groups. This brings the total number of terrorists eliminated within the period to **8,534**, 50% higher than those eliminated in same period 2022. A bird's eye view of the existing deployments are as follows:

   a.   *Horn of Africa region*. The Government of Somalia launched a deliberate military offensive against al-Shabaab. The offensive is aimed at flushing out al-Shabaab from various parts of the country under its control. The CT operations have focused on central Somalia, Hirshabelle, and Galmudug state and southern regions – Southwest and Jubaland states. The operational successes of the field deployments of AMISOM/ATMIS, US-AFRICOM, and the SNA continue to significantly degrade the capacity of al Shabaab in Somalia. With the support of ATMIS Forces, US Military Africa Command Forces (AFRICOM), and Clan Militias, Somali security forces regained control of over 215 locations previously under al-Shabaab's control, mostly in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. However, the capacity to hold newly liberated areas remains a difficulty.

   b.   *Lake Chad Basin*: The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has inflicted huge losses and setbacks on Boko Haram and ISWAP during the period and has significantly degraded the operational capability of the two groups in the Lake Chad Basin region. The frequency of Boko Haram attacks in Southeast Niger (Diffa), north-eastern Nigeria states of Adamawa and Yobe as well as Southwestern Chad have gone done considerably. ISWAP's movements within the LCB have also been restricted in a number of instances, forcing the group to develop operational theatres in other zones outside the LCB. The efforts of member states of the LCB region in defeating the terrorist groups in the area cannot be overemphasized. The individual state's efforts combined with that of the MNJTF, have yielded some positive results. The extension of the MNJTF mandate, if combined with the needed logistical and financial support could further weaken the momentum and cohesion of terrorists in LCB. Despite the degraded capacities of Boko Haram and ISWAP by the MNJTF and the national Armies of Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, the terrorist groups continue to exhibit considerable level of momentum. Multiple vulnerabilities including political issues between some member states of LCB, the operational structure and functioning of the MNJTF, the worsening security situation in the Sahel, arms proliferation from the Libya and Russia-Ukraine war as well as climate change issues continue to fester the development of terrorism in the LCB.

   c.   *Sahel region*. Following the withdrawal of the French Operation Barkhane and European Union Takuba Forces, G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce and MINUSMA are the deployments in operation. The National Armies of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger continued their Counter Terrorism offensives against JNIM and ISGS militants in their operational corridors in the Sahel

region, particularly along the Liptako-Gourma enclave. While the security situation in the Sahel deteriorated during the reported period, counter terrorism response generation remained chaotic and uncoordinated. Mali's withdrawal from the G5-Sahel Alliance in June 2022 has rendered already weakened force inactive. Similarly, the withdrawal of European Union Takuba and French Operation Barkhane Forces left MINUSMA in an unchartered territory. To consolidate the efforts of the regular army and the security forces, some countries in the Sahel have resorted to the use of private military contractors and community self-defense auto groups. Notwithstanding the CT operational constraints, the Malian Armed Forces (FaMA) neutralized a number of JNIM and ISGS militants, and also seized a significant number of weapons and ammunitions in Central and Northern Mali regions of Mopti, Timpuktu, Gao, and Koulikoro. The Burkinabe Army and Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDP), a co-opted auto defense group by the security forces intensified CT operations. A considerable number of JNIM and ISGS militants were neutralized in areas such as Namentenga, Tapoa, Comoe, Kossi, Koulpelgo, Boulgou, Soum, and Gnagna. In Niger, security forces intensified CT operations in both Tillabery and Diffa regions that resulted in the neutralization of several terrorists. Despite the tremendous efforts from the national armies of the Sahel region, terrorists in the region remained resolute and increased the pace of atrocities. Political instability in the Sahel region has also affected operational collaboration between Coastal states and Sahel States. Niger cancelled its military cooperation arrangement with Benin, while Mali has remained inactive and non-participatory in the processes of Accra Initiatives. Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger formed a new **Sahel Security Alliance**, further compounding the overlapping multidimensional security cooperation arrangements in the Sahel region. A significant challenge with the Sahel deployments is therefore the need for better coordination to ensure effectiveness in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel. Ensuring that the Sahel countries are adequately equipped for the task is a crucial part of this effort. The role that ECOWAS could play also needs to be considered and agreed upon considering that all the affected countries are ECOWAS Member States.

d. *Great Lakes Region*: Counter terrorism operations in the Great Lakes region remain a challenging situation. After six months of delays and logistical challenges, The East African Community Regional Force (EACRF) reinforced its deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Kenya airlifted Burundi's first contingent of about 100 Soldiers to Goma on March 5 and deployed to the nearby town of Sake. Additional Burundian troops arrived on March 15. The EACRF completed its full deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on 3rd April. Kenya airlifted the South Sudan contingent of 340 Soldiers to Goma, which marked the final phase of the regional bloc's deployment. On April 4, EACRF Commander Maj. Gen. Jeff Nyagah met with his MONUSCO counterpart to establish collaboration in operational boundaries, airspace control, logistical support, the opening of key supply routes, and intelligence sharing and monitoring. East African Community leaders approved extension of the regional force until September. At the request of the Government of DRC, the Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the SADC Organ Troika, Plus SADC Troika, and Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and SAMIM Contributing Countries to the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Mozambique held in July 2023, approved SADC Mission in the DRC to be called SAMIDRC, as a regional response to address the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC. The situation in the Eastern DRC, however, requires a coordinated response of all deployed forces to achieve the desired outcomes. Given the multiplicity of conflicts affecting Eastern DRC, both the EACRF and the SAMIDRC could prove a significant contributor to the peace and stability in the region. The caution, however, is that a clear concept of operation is required, and lesson from similar deployment on the continent needs to guide their operation.

e. **Northern Mozambique.** The CT operations in Northeastern Mozambican Province of Cabo Delgado continued in earnest. The force intervention by Rwandan Defense Forces, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), and Mozambican Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) has assisted greatly to reduce the number of attacks across Cabo Delgado province and regained control of major routes which were blocked and controlled by insurgents. Increased patrolling by deployed forces remained in full force. The pressure from the deployed troops caused insurgents to retreat to other into other areas including the Ntware region, the southern part of Tanzania bordering Mozambique, as well as Niassa and Nampula provinces in Northern Mozambique. Following the operational successes of the troops, the July 2023 Extra-Ordinary summit extended the SAMIM force to remain in Mozambique until July 2024 to consolidate the gains achieve since its deployment. However, apparent lack of cooperation and coordination among the various deployments, whether working in the same or different theatres appears to facilitate the insurgents' regrouping strategy. This perceived or real poor coordination between the forces, if not checked could continue to hamper counter-terrorism operations and limit CT successes. Enhancing the operational and strategic coordination between the deployed troops is a Sine Qua Non in nipping insurgency, violent extremism, and terrorism in the bud in Northern Mozambique.

25. *Tactical and Strategic CT Response Measures*. Through the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the AU Commission continues to build the capacities of Member States to respond to the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism. These efforts include the development and reviewing of national counterterrorism strategies and plans of action as well as the enhancement of Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) capacities. The Commission continues to also work to strengthen cooperation and partnerships among the Member States to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism. Sharing of criminal information and data, a list of terrorists, good practices and lessons learned is a critical area that remains a focus for ACSRT. A brief review of the ongoing efforts is enumerated below:

a. *National Counter Terrorism Legislation, Strategies and Frameworks.* Preventing and countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism remain the primary responsibility of Member States. A number of Member States are yet to review/consolidate their National Counter Terrorism legislation and develop their national strategies or frameworks to prevent and counter Violent Extremism and Terrorism. Considering that theseare critical steps for the generation of effective response to the threat, a considerable number of Member States have sought the assistance of the ACSRT in this regard. This is considered a critical capacity building requirement that requires prioritization in annual budgetary provisions to enable the ACSRT meet the demands of Member States. Within the reported period, **the Republic of Botswana** and the **Republic of Malawi** benefitted from the ACSRT's expertise in finalizing the development of their national CT/PCVE strategies and Plan of Actions (PoA). However, several countries which requested for the assistance of the ACSRT, some of whom are currently in the eye of the storm of terrorism and violent extremism could not be assisted due to lack or limited budgetary provisions to the ACSRT during budgetary allocation and approval.

b. *ACSRT's Capacity building assistance to Member States*. Theprimarymandate of the ACSRT is to assist AU Member States build their counter terrorism capacities. The 2023 program activities of the Centre were therefore in line with this primary mandate. Although the Centre has made considerable progress in its program implementation, several basic obstacles continue to prevent it from performing at full potential. The intervention of the PSC might however be required to speed up action on a number of the related issues including budgetary allocation and early release of funds as well restructuring the ACSRT to effectively deliver on its mandates. In 2023, amidst logistical and financial constraints, the ACSRT with the support

of partners undertook a number of capacity building activities, which benefitted more than 1,000 CT and PCVE experts on the continent in AUMS, most of whom are Law Enforcement Officers, Military, Government Policy Decision Makers, Judicial Officers and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The programs are listed below:

i. ***On 07-08 February, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia***. Workshop on Integrated Responses to Preventing Violent Extremism and Countering Violent Extremism in East and Southern Africa, organized in partnership with US Based Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) and funded by ACSS;

ii. ***On 14-16 February, Dar Es Salam, Tanzania.*** Roundtable on Integrating Responses to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in East and Southern Africa and Strengthening national and regional counterterrorism coordination mechanisms in Africa, organized in partnership with US Based Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) and funded by ACSS;

iii. ***On 27 March- 01 April, Kinshasa, DRC:*** National Course and Technical Workshop on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), organized in partnership with FDFA Switzerland, and part of a Swiss funded PVE Program;

iv. ***On 22- 23 May, Algiers, Algeria:*** Workshop on the Horn of Africa Regional Multidimensional Security Cooperation, organized in partnership with NATO Strategic Direction South Hub (NSD-S HUB), and funded by NSD-S HUB;

v. ***On 05-08 June, Cotonou, Benin:*** National Course and Technical Workshop on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, for the Democratic Republic of Benin, organized in partnership with FDFA Switzerland, and part of a Swiss funded PVE Program;

vi. ***On 11-22 September, Windhoek, Namibia.*** National Training Course on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Terrorism for Republic of Namibia and funded by the Government of Namibia;

vii. ***On 26-29 September, Algiers, Algeria:*** Regional Workshop on Preventing the Use of Cyberspace for Terrorism Purposes, organized in partnership with North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) and African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), and funded by European Union (EU);

viii. ***01-03 October, Dakar Senegal:*** Regional Workshop on Threat Assessment Models for Civil Aviation Security for the West Africa region, organized in partnership with United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) and International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and funded by UN; et

ix. ***23-25 October, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire:*** Roundtable on Alternative Approaches/Responses to Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism in West Africa and the Sahel region, organized in partnership with AUC Mediation and Dialogue Division (MDD), African Union Support Mission in Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL) and Cabinet ESEN (CSO), and funded by the AUC.

c. **ACSRT Database and Information Sharing Platform.** The ACSRT monitors terrorism incidents on the continent in real-time on daily basis. The purpose of this is to facilitate data driven

decision making processes as a response to the terrorism threats. As a result, the ACSRT Situation Staff monitor occurrence of terrorism and reports them in the form of Daily News Alert and disseminated every day to member states and relevant AU and UN agencies as well as partner organisations. Staff of the Database and Documentation Unit then mine the terrorism incidents store the information in the Africa Terrorism Database, hosted by the ACSRT and make them available to Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on request. The Centre is in the process of finalizing its **online database** to facilitate remote access to the terrorism data by all member states. A development of **Terrorism Mobile Application** is also at its final stage, to be deployed in Member states, RECS and RMs, through the designated National and Regional Focal Points, to facilitate secure and seamless sharing of terrorism data, exchange of information and alerts generation.

d. **Research and Publication, Early Warning Analysis.** The ACSRT continues to conduct periodic research studies and policy briefs to inform policy formulation and implementation at the level of Member States. During the reporting period, the ACSRT published various analytical reports and policy briefs, in addition to the production of the Monthly Terrorism Factsheets, Quarterly Africa Terrorism Bulletin (QATB), and Mid-Term Terrorism Trends Analysis Report for the benefit of the Member States and relevant stakeholders to constantly keep them updated on the threats. Preliminary reports on some key incidents, as well as situational analysis reports on the complexity of the security environment in Eastern DRC were published. Policy Briefs on the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine War as well as the withdrawal of the MINUSMA troops and its implication on the fights against terrorism and violent extremism were also produced during the period in review. Field research on the nexus between illicit proliferation and circulation of SALW and the growing terrorism and violent extremism in Africa was commissioned and conducted in more than 36 AUMS, and whose report findings is being finalized for the attention of the PSC. Unfortunately, other field research on pertinent issues underpinning and sustaining the momentum of the terrorism threats, which were requested by the PSC in its various communiques could not be undertaken due to lack of availability or absence of funds. The ACSRT, as part of its mandate is to produce, in each year two editions of the **African Journal on Terrorism (AJT).** The Journal has currently become the first choice of consideration by African Academics and Scholars researching and publishing on terrorism. This is as a result of the editorial quality and publication standard that is maintained. This year, two editions of the journal in both English and French have been produced with over 400 copies printed and distributed across the continent.

26. ***Implementation Status of 2022 Malabo Extra-Ordinary Summit Decision.*** The 16th Extraordinary Summit of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea held in May 2022, acknowledged the evolution of the terrorism threat. The resultant Malabo Declaration and Decision on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Change of Governments (UCGs) recognized the need to establish an AU Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism (AUMCCT) for coordination and monitoring; called on the PSC to immediately operationalize its sub-committee on CT; and to also activate its sub-committee on Sanctions among others. The ToR and the modalities on the functioning of the AUMCCT has been duly developed and shaped by the benevolence expertise of the PSC Committee of Experts (CoE). The ToR is being given the due consideration and prioritisation and would be submitted by the AU commission to the appropriate policy organ for approval and adoption as directed and contained in the 16th extraordinary summit decision on terrorism and unconstitutional changes of government. It is expected that the PSC will expedite actions on the full operationalization, implementation, and activation of its sub-committees on counter terrorism and sanctions for effective response generation to the evolving threat landscape.

27.   **Implementation Status of the 36ᵗʰOrdinary Summit Decision on Restructuring of the ACSRT.** The 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in February 2023, at Addis Ababa Ethiopia, took note on the need to change the name of the ACSRT to African Union Counter Terrorism Centre (AUCTC), and review its status and structure, to enable it to be aligned with similar international bodies, and improve synergies and further enhance the efficiency of member states in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism; and requested the commission in line with the framework of institutional reforms, to undertake the due process and report back to the assembly. The ACSRT urgently requires restructuring to enable it to recruit the appropriate category of staff to enable it deliver on its mandate in accordance with the evolving terrorism and violent extremism threat situation on the continent. The revised status and proposed new structure have been developed. In view of the seriousness of the Violent Extremism and Terrorism situation on the continent, the PSC may want to give priority attention to the restructuring of the Centre which is indeed long overdue.

VI.   CONCLUSIONS

28.   Africa is gradually becoming the global epicentre of terrorism and violent extremism (TVE) activities. Activities of terrorist and violent extremist groups have resulted in devastating atrocities against Civilians, Security Forces and Critical infrastructures. Local communities have been displaced creating a dire humanitarian crisis across the continent, as insecurity arising from terrorism and violent extremism have led to the highest levels of population displacement - both Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) and refugees across Nigeria, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, among many other places in Africa.

29.   The TVE threat is setting in motion a dramatic reversal of governance and democratic gains and threatening the very existence of the state and its citizens. The widespread fatalities and casualties caused by the TVE phenomenon as well as the displacement of thousands of people have created situations of pronounced and critical humanitarian need. This, therefore, brings to the fore the need to pay closer attention to the root causes and drivers of TVE. Also, understanding the drivers, incentives, and dynamics of the recruitment process, from its initial conditions and factors, through to the 'tipping point' that triggers individuals to take the step of joining a violent extremist group could greatly reshape the CT/PCVE response generation efforts.

30.   The incidents recorded so far in 2023 have shown that terrorism and violent extremism continued unabated across the African Continent. The situation showed no sign of improvement. Terrorist groups sustained their activities, in most cases launching devastating attacks against civilians in local communities and against security installations. The events and atrocities by the groups reinforce the desire to entrench the activities of violent extremism and communicate their resolve of creating chaos aimed at undermining state security apparatus. The situation calls for the reassessment of the counter terrorism response generation as to whether it is adequately yielding the desire results. While counter terrorism operations across the continent weaken and degrade terrorist capacities, the sources of resilience and resurgence of the groups are yet to be broken.

31.   The dynamics of terrorist activities for the period have heightened the relevance of community engagement and awareness on terrorism and violent extremism. Cases of terrorist engaging with local communities undetected, and in the process wining the hearts and minds of local population aided terrorist attacks for the period in many parts of the continent. In many local communities, the local population have become sympathetic to the cause of extremist groups for varied reasons including the lack of trust between security forces and the citizenry as well as complete disregard for human rights during counter terrorism operation by state actors. These factors and

others have eroded the confidence of local communities in their government and have driven them towards violent extremist groups.

32.   Effective response to the prevailing situation would require that the tempo of the ongoing Intelligence led military operations be intensified to completely deny terrorist groups the territory that they currently control. This should, however, be complemented with a creeping ground implementation of a well thought through stakeholders-based Human Security Response Approach plan that assures justice, protection, inclusion, education and the provision of social amenities in order to win the hearts and minds of the local communities.

VII.   <u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

33.   Considering that Article 4 of the Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism makes the PSC the AU organ responsible for harmonizing and coordinating continental efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism, the following recommendations are hereby made for consideration by the Council:

a) The PSC may wish to urge Member States that have not yet passed or reviewed their national terrorism legislation to be in conformity with AU CT Framework and/or developed national frameworks or strategies for preventing and countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism to do so as soon as practicable;

b) Member States of the AU should be encouraged to ratify, domesticate and implement the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development as a preventative Human Security Response mechanism for addressing the governance related root causes of Violent Extremism that could lead to Terrorism. A number of the governance deficit gaps that contribute to the incidence of Violent Extremism that could lead to Terrorism could be addressed by the ratification, domestication and implementation of the provisions of the Charter;

c) The PSC may want to urgently examine the developing Violent Extremism situation in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique in order to prevent its spread to other areas within the country and beyond;

d) The ACSRT as the AU Centre of Excellence for Counter Terrorism requires some devoted attention to address a number of fundamental issues affecting the capacity and opportunity of the Centre to deliver on its mandate of assisting AU Member States build their capacities to prevent and counter Violent Extremism and Terrorism on the continent. In that regard, accelerate the adoption of the reviewed status, modalities and structure needed to change the ACSRT to African Union Counter Terrorism Centre (AUCTC);

e) The PSC should facilitate the provision, prioritization, and timely disbursement of program funds for the implementation of ACSRT Counter-Terrorism capacity building programs in Member States in accordance with program schedules agreed upon by Member States with the ACSRT;

f) The PSC may want to urge the various RECs to prioritize assistance to Member States for the early identification of potential inter-ethnic and inter-communal violent clashes and advise on pre-emptive action to forestall the eruption of violence as well as resolve the existing disputes through mediation;

g) The individual missions of military deployments on the continent require further coordination so as to ensure that they have a common purpose and are mutually supporting. The involvement of RECs in the coordination of such deployments which are within RECs areas of responsibility could ensure unity of purpose and economy of effort;

h) There is the urgent need to evolve concepts of operations that will ensure the protection of security personnel deployed on counter-terrorism operations in isolated places. A neglect of this could lead to the total loss of morale of the deployed troops which in itself could lead to national instability;

i) Operationalize the Sub-Committee on Counterterrorism to discharge its mandate particularly in preparing, publicizing, and reviewing a list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorism; and

j) Review the existing AU counter-terrorism legal framework in line with the existing international counter-terrorism legal framework.

2023-10-27

Communiqué of the 1182nd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 27 October 2023, on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Counter-Terrorism in Africa.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission