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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
1107<sup>th</sup> MEETING

23 SEPTEMBER 2022  
NEW YORK, USA

PSC/MIN/CN.1107 (2022)

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN  
UNION ON STRENGTHENING THE EFFORTS OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PREVENT  
AND COMBAT TERRORISM, VIOLENT EXTREMISM, AND RADICALIZATION**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Ghana has scheduled a PSC meeting at the Ministerial Level with the expected participation of relevant actors on the margins of the forthcoming UN General Assembly in September, 2022. The meeting intends to provide the platform for consultation and debate on how to strengthen Regional Organisations to play their role in the collective efforts for maintenance of Peace and Security in Africa, particularly in terms of preventing and combatting of terrorism, violent extremism, and radicalization.

2. Africa is facing a serious increase in the rate of terrorism and violent extremism. According to the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), between 1 January and 31 June 2022, about 699 terrorist attacks took place in Africa, resulting in 5,412 deaths, 3,517 (61%) of them were civilian. Highlighting the trend in terrorist attacks and the resultant fatalities over the years, the ACSRT pointed out that Africa witnessed 400% and 237% rises in attacks and deaths respectively between 2012 and 2020.

3. Geographically, the threat has expanded across all regions of the continent. By the Report of Addis Ababa based Pan-African think tank, Amani Africa, released ahead of the African Union Summit in Malabo on terrorism, the threat of terrorism has not only engulfed the Sahel, a region currently most affected by this menace, but also reared its ugly head across the continent. Apart from entrenching itself in the regions where it was prominent, the threat has also since registered increasingly worrying geographic expansion. And today it has established its foothold on all the five regions of the continent. Indications are that there is real risk of the threat further expanding into the littoral countries of West Africa and parts of the Great Lakes and East Africa.

4. Apart from the resulting negative humanitarian crisis and socio-economic consequences, the situation is compounding Africa's already dire peace and security challenges in all the five regions of the continent. Currently, West Africa is the most affected and there are credible signs that, if nothing is done to address the situation urgently, the region might witness further widening of the crisis.

5. Whereas Member States continue to adopt and implement measures aimed at preventing and countering this threat, which need to be commended immensely, there is obvious room for improvement. In the efforts to improve current responses, understanding the role of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) in addressing the threat is critical as they are currently at the forefront of the challenges and will remain important implementers of the necessary interventions.

6. The AU and UN have continued to rally continental and international support and response measures to furtherance of efforts of the current member states, towards effectively curbing the rise in the phenomenon on the continent.

7. Recognizing the challenge facing the Continent, the Heads of State and Government of the AU, in May 2022, held the 16<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in which the AU agreed, among others, to establish a Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism to provide practical proposals on how to address this scourge. The Extraordinary Summit also expressed profound concerns on the escalation of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, including the influx of foreign terrorist fighters

(FTFs), the deepening nexus between terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational organized crime, as well as the resulting social, economic, and humanitarian effects.

## **II. AFRICAN UNION'S RESPONSE**

**8.** The AU has a long history of efforts to prevent and combat terrorism on the continent. Efforts in this direction stretch all the way back to the 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) held in Dakar, Senegal, in 1992, where the Assembly adopted Resolution AHG/Res.213(XXVIII), which called on Member States to enhance cooperation and coordination, in order to fight the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism. Also, at its 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Tunis, Tunisia, in 1994, the Assembly adopted Declaration AHG/Decl.2(XXX), which among others, rejected all forms of discrimination, injustice, extremism and terrorism; and unequivocally condemned as criminal all terrorist acts, methods and practices.

**9.** These efforts culminated in the adoption of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in 1999, and its Protocol in 2004. The Convention remains the continent's key legal framework for preventing and combating terrorism. The Protocol is aimed at enhancing the implementation of the Convention and to give effect to coordinating and harmonizing continental efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism in all aspects. On the other hand, the Plan of Action for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in 2002, as concrete expression to the commitments and obligations of Member States as contained in the 1999 Convention, among others, establishes the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) as a structure to centralize information, research and analyses on terrorism and terrorist groups, and develop training programs for Member States.

**10.** The AU also established the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) as a specialized institution for police cooperation in fighting transnational organized crime. Even in its nascent stage, having been established in 2017, AFRIPOL, working with INTERPOL and other police cooperation organizations globally, is already providing capacity building and supporting joint operations among Member States in fighting specific transnational crimes. With increasing evidence that terrorists are turning to transnational organized crime networks to generate funding and acquire logistical support to carry out their violent acts, the role of AFRIPOL in preventing and fighting terrorism cannot be overstated.

**11.** Indeed, the AU has put in place policy and institutional frameworks to build the capacities of and support Member States and RECs/RMs efforts in preventing and combatting terrorism and violent extremism. However, challenges in effective responses persist, and the Continent continues to witness the activities of terrorist and violent extremist groups. The responses have largely been military in nature, and the continued attacks have led to further militarization of states' responses. However, there is the need to exert more efforts to fully understand the nature of the operations of terrorist and violent extremist groups, including how terrorists and violent extremists work with illicit actors to recruit and mobilize resources. There is also the need for renewed efforts towards frustrating terrorist recruitment by countering the narratives and approaches used by these groups, in a sustainable manner. It is important that affected Member States should analyze and draw lessons from their counter-terrorism efforts and adapt accordingly. This will help avoid those factors that push

disgruntled people into the arms of terrorists and provide the basis for sustainable responses at the national, regional, and continental levels.

**12.** In the Declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government held in May 2022, the Summit committed to “develop a comprehensive Continental Strategic Plan of Action on countering terrorism in Africa, premised on existing national and regional strategies, to enhance coordination and coherence, in order to consolidate coordination and enhance actions”.

### **III. EFFORTS OF RECs/RMs**

**13.** Most of the RECs/RMs have developed their Regional Counter Terrorism Strategies as part of their efforts to strengthen cooperation among Member States. For example, apart from the various relevant legal instruments, ECOWAS has the Political Declaration and Common Position Against Terrorism and a strategy on counter-terrorism (2013). The implementation of these strategies is aimed at giving effect to the regional, continental, and international counter-terrorism instruments.

**14.** As experiences in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel illustrate, terrorism and its threats are trans-regional. Accordingly, another aspect of the role of RECs/RMs that require strengthening is horizontal coordination between RECs/RMs. In this respect, a major initiative that needs to be further supported and institutionalized is the 30 July 2018 Joint ECOWAS and ECCAS Heads of State Meeting and its Lome Declaration on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight Against Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

**15.** It is, however, noted that other ad hoc military coalitions, such as the G5 Sahel Force, have been established as a military response to combat terrorism. Whereas these coalitions make a welcome contribution to combating terrorism, coordination with the RECs/RMs, and with the AUs African Standby Force is one area of improvement.

**16.** Enhancing the existing role of RECs/RMs also requires the effective implementation of capacity building and monitoring and tracking program at the level of RECs/RMs. Such would be a program for the coordination, harmonization, and implementation of initiatives for countering terrorism both at national and importantly regional levels including through facilitating and harnessing the normative and institutional resources of the AU and the UN and for the study, tracking of and reporting on the threat of terrorism.

**17.** Equally important is the establishment of mechanisms through which RECs/RMs can benefit from existing continental arrangements put in place for addressing the scourge and threat of terrorism. This includes for example the need for RECs/RMs to receive support from and work with AFRIPOL.

### **IV. OBJECTIVES**

**18.** The Ministerial meeting is expected to make recommendations that will not only enhance the capacity of the RECs/RMs to deal effectively with terrorism and violent extremism through prevention, but also develop a strategy for coordination of efforts between the AU and the RECs/RMs for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

**19.** The meeting is also expected to exchange views on the implementation of the outcome of the 16<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in particular, with regard to the (i) establishment of the Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism and (ii) the development of a comprehensive Continental Strategic Plan of Action on countering terrorism in Africa.

**20.** The session will examine and provide clarity on what needs to be done to enhance the efforts of the AU and RECs/RMs towards tackling terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. It will discuss how regional organizations can be strengthened for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, towards effectively dealing with the phenomena of terrorism and extreme violent on the African continent.

#### **V. EXPECTED OUTCOME**

**21.** It is expected that the PSC and other actors will adopt an outcome document of the meeting to give guidance on actions to be undertaken by the PSC and the Commission in ensuring that African Regional Organisations are strengthened and resourced to effectively deal with the maintenance of Peace and Security in Africa, particularly with respect to the prevention and management of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

#### **VI. PARTICIPANTS AND FORMAT**

**22.** The meeting will be held at the Ministerial level. H.E Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana, will preside over the Meeting as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of September 2022. PSC Members, the representatives of the RECs/RMs and other relevant actors will participate in the meeting. It is envisaged that H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security will make a presentation during this meeting, followed by interactive discussions by the PSC members, RECs/RMs and other invited guests.

#### **VII. VENUE AND DATE**

The AU PSC Ministerial Meeting will be held in a **hybrid** format on **23<sup>th</sup> September 2022**, starting at **9:00 a.m., New York time and 16:00 p.m., Addis Ababa local time**. Interpretation for English, and French will be available.

2022-09-23

# Communiqué of the 1107th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 23 September 2022 on Strengthening Regional Organizations for the Maintenance of Peace and Security in Africa.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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