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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE
MULTINATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE AGAINST THE BOKO HARAM TERRORIST GROUP AND
THE EUROPEAN UNION-AFRICAN UNION SUPPORT TO THE FORCE**

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AFRICAN UNION SUPPORT TO THE FORCE**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 1057th meeting, held on 14 January 2022, renewed the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram terrorist group for a period of twelve (12) months effective 1 February 2022. During its meeting, the Council commended the significant efforts and progress made by the MNJTF and its Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) namely, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria plus Benin, in the fight against Boko Haram. The PSC commended the MNJTF for their dedication and commitment in degrading the operational capabilities of the terrorist group, which forced large numbers of Boko Haram fighters to surrender as well as enabled the rescuing of civilians that were abducted by the terrorist group. Despite considerable MNJTF successes, and has underscored by the Council, Boko Haram remains a threat to the region and the continent, hence, calls for robust and well-coordinated joint operations to eliminate the terrorist group.

2. The MNJTF has a total strength of 16,080 personnel that include one Senior Police Advisor to the MNJTF Commander, 99 Staff Officers (SOs) at the Headquarters (HQ) of the MNJTF and 15,980 troops in the 4 sectors within the TCCs. There is also an AU Mission Support Team (MST) at the MNJTF HQ (consisting of 10 civilian staff) coordinating the delivery of the AU additional support to the force as well as advising the Commander on Human Rights and Humanitarian coordination issues.

3. Within this context, the AU has continued to support the MNJTF in line with Communique [[PSC/PR/2.\(CDLXXXIX\)](#)] adopted by the 489th meeting of the PSC held on 3 March 2015, in which the Council requested the Commission to take all necessary steps in support of the full operationalization of the MNJTF. This report provides an update on key developments since the AU PSC meeting held in January 2022, and recommendations on the way forward.

II. SECURITY SITUATION IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN MNJTF AREA OF OPERATION

4. The Boko Haram terrorist group continues to pose a regional security threat in the Lake Chad Basin, with the objective of establishing a caliphate in the North-East of Nigeria, 5th Region of Niger, 4th Region of Chad, and in the Far North of Cameroon. Currently, they operate in two main factions within the MNJTF Area of Operation namely: The Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) which operates from the remote Lake Chad Islands, around the Kamadougou Yobe River corridor as well as Sambisa Forest and Mandara Mountains; and the Buduma/Jama'atu Ahli Al-Sunna lil Da'wa Wal Jihad (JAS) which operates from Northern Islands of Lake Chad, Mandara mountains, parts of Sambisa forest and contests with ISWAP for the areas along Komadougou Yobe river which serves as a logistics corridor.

5. In this regard, and whilst the security situation in the MNJTF Area of Operation is generally calm the Terrorist Group continues to carry out attacks using Human and Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (IED) to hamper state authority within the areas it operates, demonstrating a determination to resist and undermine MNJTF operations and terrorising the local population. As a result of continued progress by the MNJTF in degrading the capabilities of the Boko Haram Terrorist Group, attacks have reduced in 2022 compared to 2021.

6. For instance, in the first three (3) Quarters of 2022, there were: 56 attacks on military locations against 75 attacks witnessed within the same period in 2021; 93 attacks targeting local communities against 121 similar attacks in 2021. This shows about 25 percent reduction in the attacks on military targets and about 28 percent decrease in the attacks on communities compared to 2021. Additionally, a total of 21 IED incidents were recorded in 2022 compared to 25 incidents during the same period in 2021; 19 soldiers and 21 civilians killed during the attacks in 2022 against 55 soldiers and 34 civilians who died during same period in 2021.

7. During this year, the MNJTF has conducted two major military operations: Operation Sharan Fage and Operation Lake Sanity, both of which achieved their objectives. These Operation led to the neutralization of 805 Boko Haram fighters and some of their leaders, the destruction of 44 vehicles of the group, its VBIED workshops and 70 assorted weapons, including mortar tubes that were captured. Additionally, 56 hostages were rescued, including women and children. This was the first time that the MNJTF was able to conduct operations in the Boko Haram enclaves of the Lake Chad and successfully diminished the attack capabilities of the group. As such, the reduction in Boko Haram's capacity is attributed to the depletion in the lethal capacity of the group. Furthermore, the MNJTF's use of Mine Resistance Ambush Protected Vehicles and improvement in C-IED capacity assisted to minimise the effects of the group's IED/VBIED attacks.

8. The MNJTF operations have created an enabling environment for the return and resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well as the implementation of humanitarian activities in local communities by government and non-governmental organizations. For instance, since January 2022 to date, 65 communities in total have been able to resettle IDPs, 18 in Sector 1 (Cameroon), 20 in Sector 2 (Chad), 5 in Sector 3 (Nigeria) and 22 in Sector 4 (Niger), with an average of over 220,000 IDPs/refugees who returned to their homes within Lake Chad Basin Region. While the number of resettled populations has continued to rise, most of these communities have received little or no form of humanitarian assistance and there is a need for an urgent action to enhance the livelihood of these resettled communities.

9. There has been a significant increase in the number of Boko Haram fighters and sympathizers that continue to surrender. A total of 2,225 terrorists and their families surrendered to the MNJTF from January to October 2022. In total, about 81,325 Boko Haram associated persons including 16,417 fighters, 24,222 women and 40,686 children have surrendered to national agencies since 2018 and are currently undergoing rehabilitation. The MNJTF receives, processes and hands over surrendered persons associated with Boko Haram to the national governments in line with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights standards. While the MNJTF continues to provide free corridor as well as advocate for insurgents to surrender, this requires equal commitment of all Troop and Police Contributing Countries (TCCs) for the success of these efforts, including through the establishment of facilities for handling and management of surrendered Boko Haram fighters.

III. EUROPEAN UNION –AFRICAN UNION ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THE MNJTF

10. It is recalled that the 484th AU PSC meeting called on AU Member States and the international community to extend all necessary support, including financial and logistical assistance, to the efforts of the Member States of the LCBC and Benin in the fight against the Boko Haram Terrorist Group. In this regard, since July 2016, the European Union (EU), has continued to provide financial support to the LCBC/MNJTF, through the AU, based on the MNJTF requirements, within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

and Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) signed between the AU Commission, LCBC and MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). The EU funding support to MNJTF for the period of January to December 2022 amounts to USD \$ 20.8 million, with the EU's indication of willingness to provide more funds to support the MNJTF for the period 2023-24.

11. The EU's contribution to the AU additional support to the MNJTF during the course of 2022 includes: Air Mobility services comprising of 3 helicopters for logistics/personnel movement and casualty evacuation, Level III medical services, Fuel, Command-Control-Communication and Information System (C3IS), Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) for the MNJTF HQ Staff Officers, salaries to civilian staff supporting the MNJTF, and MNJTF HQ running costs that allow the MNJTF HQ to effectively plan, coordinate and sustain military operations in line with the given mandate and the tasks set out in the approved Strategic Concept of Operations.

12. An AU-EU joint mission to the MNJTF was held from 5 to 8 April 2022 to review the parameters of the EU-post-2022 funding support to the MNJTF and called for operationalisation of the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework for the MNJTF. Following this, the Commission assessed the implementation of the AU additional support to the MNJTF from 4 to 9 September 2022 and established the impact of the support. Meanwhile, a 9th Joint Steering Committee (JSC) meeting, between the AU Commission, the LCBC Executive Secretariat, the MNJTF TCCs and the EU, was held from 14 to 15 September 2022 to coordinate and share information on funds and other support mobilised and provided by the AU to the MNJTF. All these endeavours recommended sustenance of the AU additional support beyond 2022 and established the new MNJTF support requirements going forward.

13. The AU additional support to the MNJTF also includes civilian staff comprising of Four (4) Staff of the Strategic Support Cell (SSC) at the AU Headquarters and 10 Staff of the Mission Support Team (MST) embedded within the MNJTF HQ. These civilian staff do coordinate the delivery of the additional support including the follow-up and accounting for the utilisation of funds, implementation of the services and delivery of fuel, advising the MNJTF on Human Rights and Humanitarian Coordination issues, and linking the strategic and operational levels of the MNJTF mission management.

14. Supporting the achievement of the mandate, the AU Commission provides support to the MNJTF in ensuring that compliance to Regional and International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law standards are fulfilled. Meanwhile, the AU Commission is currently supporting the MNJTF in the development of mission specific procedures on the Management of Recovered Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and is planning to hold a facilitate a validation workshop on the draft MNJTF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the Management of Recovered SALW in the MNJTF area of operations.

IV. AU SUPPORT TO THE REGIONAL STABILISATION STRATEGY THAT CONSOLIDATES THE MNJTF SUCCESSES

15. The sustained and progressive improvement of the security situation in the Lake Chad Basin has resulted in the mass surrender of Boko Haram combatants and associated persons, as well as the increasing return of affected populations to their homes. This has brought into focus the need for investment into comprehensive reintegration efforts. Through the AU/LCBC/GIZ Mental Health and Psychosocial Support programme, the AU stabilization team is supporting broader efforts at Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration initiatives undertaken by the LCBC.

16. While robust policing is still needed to consolidate the gains, tangible outcomes from the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience (RS-SRR) of the areas affected by Boko Haram activities, including rehabilitation of facilities for law enforcement across affected areas, construction of essential infrastructure and basic services, and provision of opportunity-enhancing schemes for affected communities, are supporting a gradual return to normalcy. With the threat of Boko Haram diminishing in the region, investment in Cross Border Trade has increased and commercial activities at the borders between Cameroon and Nigeria have resumed.

V. CHALLENGES

17. The AU and the MNJTF notes that the force faces the following challenges:
- a. Inadequate fuel to run the operational vehicles and other equipment;
 - b. Lack of an enhanced medical facility at MNJTF HQ to cater for the 100 Mission Staff Officers (MSOs) and insufficient first line medical care in case of emergencies;
 - c. Aging fleet of vehicles whose repair is increasingly not economically viable;
 - d. Inadequate funds for the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs).

VI. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The MNJTF remains a cohesive, coordinated and effective regional coalition against the Boko Haram terrorist group in the Lake Chad Basin region backed by the collective commitment and efforts of the TCCs, as well as the support of the AU and the international community.

19. There is a remarkable reduction in Boko Haram's capability and this is due to the significant reduction of the group's lethal capacity. These gains contribute to the mass surrender of its fighters, return and resettlement of refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and implementation of stabilisation, recovery and resilience activities in the Boko Haram affected communities.

20. The support of the AU and AU partners, particularly the EU, continues to play a critical role in the effectiveness of the MNJTF operations and contributes to the overall achievement of the MNJTF mandate by addressing the MNJTF's operational support requirements and needs in the planning, conduct and sustainment of military operations against Boko Haram. This should in turn lead to the eventual elimination of Boko Haram terrorist group and its activities as well as stabilisation and recovery of the affected areas.

21. The RS-SRR continues to be the primary strategy for driving in-conflict interventions and post-conflict reconstruction and development in the Lake Chad Basin. The AU Commission's institutional support for the RS-SRR must be maintained to sustain and improve the gains.

22. The AU Commission encourages the MNJTF TCCs to establish more facilities and dedicate more resources to manage the increasing number of surrendering Boko Haram fighters and their families.

23. Considering the above, the PSC may wish to consider the following:

- a. Call on the AU and the international community to continue supporting the MNJTF to consolidate its ongoing gains and achievements in its operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group;
- b. Call on the AU and the international community to support the MNJTF TCCs in the development, implementation and enhancement of comprehensive reintegration plans for surrendered Boko Haram fighters and their families, in line with the existing national frameworks as well as international norms and standards;
- c. Request the AU Commission to maintain institutional support for the implementation of the RS-SRR in order to consolidate, sustain and improve the security gains of the MNJTF operations in the affected areas;
- d. Urge the countries of the Lake Chad Basin region to enhance border security to curtail the proliferation of arms and reinforce regional engagements on the control of small arms and light weapons;
- e. Request the AU and the LCBC to renew the MoU and SIA that guides the provision of the AU additional support to the MNJTF for a period of one year (01 February 2023 to 31 January 2024); and
- f. Renew the MNJTF mandate for 12 months effective 01 February 2023.

2022-12-12

Communiqué of the 1126th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 12 December 2022 on the Consideration of the Mandate of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

Peace and Security Council

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