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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 571st MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

29 JANUARY 2016

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/AHG/COMM.1(DLXXI)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 571st meeting held on 29 January 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the level of Heads of State and Government, having reviewed the AU efforts against terrorism, adopted the following decision on the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the update provided by the AU Commission in pursuance of communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, adopted by Council at its 455th meeting held on 2 September 2014, at the Level of heads of State and Government in Nairobi, Kenya. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Gambia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria and South Africa;
2. **Recalls** its previous communiqués and press statements on the issue of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, and **re-emphasizes** the critical importance of the provisions of communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) of its 455th meeting. Council **also recalls** communique PSC/PR/COMM.(DXLIII) and press statement PSC/P R/BR.2(DLX) adopted at its 543rd and 560th meetings held on 11 September 2015 and 26 November 2015, respectively, which articulated a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the AU and international counter-terrorism instruments in Africa;
3. **Emphasizes the need** for renewed efforts to combat extremism and radicalizing religious interpretations that foster intolerance and violence. Council **notes** that these interpretations which are promoted by foreign preachers and other actors, are a threat to Africa's security and stability and should be strongly fought against;
4. **Reaffirms** the continued relevance of the instruments adopted by the OAU/AU over the past years to address the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, notably the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted by the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 to 14 July 1999, and the Supplementary Protocol adopted by the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, from 6 to 8 July 2004, as well as the 2002 AU Plan of Action, adopted by the 1st AU High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, held in Algiers, from 11 to 14 September 2002, and the AU Model Law on anti-terrorism, endorsed by the 17th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Malabo, from 30 June to 1 July 2011;
5. **Expresses deep concern** at the escalating trends of terrorism in Africa, particularly in Northern Africa, the Sahelo-Saharan region, Central and Eastern Africa, and also globally, marked by terrorist attacks spreading geographically and with ever changing tactics, targets, actors, recruitment methods and funding, perpetrated by Al-Qaida and its affiliates, including Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Shabaab, Al-Mourabitoun and Ansar Dine, and by the so-called Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates, including Boko Haram and Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islam;
6. **Reiterates its deep concern** over the increasing capacity of terrorist organizations to continue to finance their activities through a variety of means connected to transnational organized crime, such as piracy, kidnap-for-ransom (KFR), drug and human trafficking, selling of antiquities, and illegal exploitation and selling of natural resources. Council **stresses the need** to take all necessary measures

to fight terrorist financing and for Member States to work towards developing common standards to better track terrorist financing and its sources in accordance with the relevant African and international instruments. In this regard, Council **looks forward** to the immediate convening of a high-level meeting of Member States on the issue of financing of terrorism, with a view to identifying practical measures to address this problem more effectively. In this context, Council **welcomes** the offer by Algeria to host the meeting. Council **further welcomes** the steps taken to operationalize the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), as part of the efforts to combat transnational organized crime and terrorism;

7. **Reiterates its strong condemnation** of the terrorist attacks that continue to be carried out against public places, including educational institutions, hotels, markets and places of worship, resulting in the death of hundreds, wounding many more and leading to displacements of millions. Council **notes** that the recent attacks in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Somalia were taking place against the backdrop of a global rise in terrorist activities;

8. **Notes with deep concern** that the various recent attacks on the continent are a reminder of the harsh reality of brutal acts of terrorism, which cause mass casualties, thereby undermining the capacities of Member States to adequately provide for state and human security. Council **further notes** that the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) is especially of increasing concern, as more Africans are reported to be joining the ranks of the so-called IS, and **calls on** the international partners to enhance assistance through sharing with AU Member States, lists of their nationals that have been identified as FTFs;

9. **Reiterates further** the AU's outrage at the despicable use of children by terrorist groups to carry out attacks and the AU's total rejection of all acts of terrorism and violent extremism and its determination to rid Africa of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, which cannot be justified under any circumstances;

10. **Acknowledges** the progress made on the ground by the Troop Contributing Countries to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council **also notes** that the areas that had previously been under the control of this group, have been fully recovered by the Nigerian armed forces. Council **commends** Nigeria for its previous financial contribution to the MNJTF and for its decision, as announced, to make further contribution to the Force;

11. **Commends** the efforts of the AU Commission towards continued assistance to Member States on the effective implementation of the AU counter-terrorism framework. In this regard, Council **further commends** the support provided to Member States in reviewing their national legislations and strengthening regional coordination, notably within the frameworks of the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), the establishment of Djibouti Process for Eastern Africa, and the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU). In this context, Council **also urges** the AU Commission to enhance partnerships with the relevant United Nations institutions, the EU and bilateral partners;

12. **Encourages** the AU Commission to pursue and intensify its efforts to support the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms for the Central Africa and Southern Africa regions to address specific transnational threats in these regions. Council **notes** the support extended by the

Southern African Development Community (SADC) towards the development of a regional counter-terrorism strategy, which was endorsed by the 35th Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 17 to 18 August 2015;

13. **Welcomes** the efforts made by the Member States to sustain their efforts to enhance their capacities towards effective prevention and combating of terrorism, and **encourages** them to pursue action-oriented steps to strengthen national institutions and enhance cooperation and sharing of information and intelligence as concrete expression of their renewed commitment to combat terrorism and violent extremism;

14. **Expresses concern** that, despite the sustained efforts deployed and the progress made in the prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism, the phenomenon of terrorism continues to expand both geographically and in the level of violence in various parts of Africa. Gaps continue to exist in terms of implementation and follow-up, thus undermining the effectiveness of Africa's response to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. In this respect, Council **stresses the need** for a broad range of coordinated policy responses to strengthen state capacities to address underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. To this effect, Council:

- (i) **underscores the need** for renewed efforts and increased mobilization to combat terrorism and violent extremism,
- (ii) **encourages** Member States to effectively meet their obligations under the different regional and global counter-terrorism instruments. Council **further reiterates its call** to the Member States that have not yet done so, to urgently take the necessary steps to become party to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of terrorism and its 2004 Supplementary Protocol, and to the relevant international instruments adopted under the auspices of the United Nations,
- (iii) **encourages** Member States to deepen mutual efforts in security cooperation and in the fight against terrorism, on the basis of a unified vision of collective security, shared responsibility and transparency, reiterating the imperative of collective and coordinated action in preventing and combating terrorism,
- (iv) **reiterates its call** for enhanced collaboration between the AU and the international partners in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, as this scourge is a global phenomenon which poses a serious threat to international peace and security,
- (v) **encourages** the Commission to continue working with partners and the international community to provide support and facilitate technical and operational capacities of Member States for effective prevention and combating of terrorism, in areas such as, intelligence gathering and analysis, critical infrastructures and sensitive sites protection, detection and neutralization of explosives, aviation and maritime security and combating terrorism financing. Council **calls on** the Commission to develop comprehensive counter-terrorism train-the-trainer programs and manuals and the organization of regional exercises focused on counter-terrorism and transnational crime. Council **further calls on** the Commission to develop and integrate counter-terrorism modules in peace support operations pre deployment training,
- (vi) **requests** the Commission to expedite the implementation of the tasks entrusted to it as per communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), with particular emphasis on the

assessment of the implementation status of the 2002 Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the establishment of the African list of terrorist groups, entities and individuals, and the elaboration of an African Arrest Warrant for persons charged with, or convicted of, terrorist acts,

- (vii) **encourages** the Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism ACSRT and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Service of Africa (CISSA) to continue providing early warning to allow early response by countries and region,
- (viii) **stresses the importance** of holding the Annual Consultative Forum with the relevant international partners, as provided for in communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), to enable harmonization of existing strategies and promote action oriented collaboration and coordination,
- (ix) **renews its call** for all state Parties to the relevant African and international instruments to implement, in full, all the provisions contained therein, including in legislative and judicial measures, border control, financial controls, sharing of information and intelligence, strengthening capacities of the relevant agencies, and cooperation and coordination at regional, continental and international levels. In this regard, Council **urges, once again**, all Member States to submit their requests to the AU Commission for technical support, where necessary;

15. **Appeals** to Member States to make financial contributions to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Africa and **calls on** AU partners to continue to provide financial and technical support to Africa's efforts against terrorism and violent extremism, including to the Commission and the ACSRT;

16. **Emphasizes the need** for Member States to address all conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, noting that terrorist groups exploit vulnerabilities caused by conditions such as poverty, prolonged unresolved conflicts, discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and poor governance, as a basis to recruit and radicalize individuals. Council, however, **stresses** that none of these conditions can be an excuse for or justify any acts of terrorism;

17. **Acknowledges** that a number of aspects of communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) remain pending and **requests** the Commission to expedite the implementation of the tasks entrusted to it as per communique PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), and to regularly brief Council on the progress made, in this effect;

18. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.