

AFRICAN UNION

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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 973rd MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
18 JANUARY 2021**

PSC/PR/COMM.(CM LXXIII)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its virtual 973rd meeting held on 18 January 2021, considered the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram and adopted the following decision:

The Peace and Security Council:

Taking note of the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of Republic of Senegal to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Baye Moctar Diop, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of January 2021, and the statement read by the AU Acting Director for Peace and Security Department, Ms. Fiona Lortan, on behalf of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui; **also taking note** of the report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and AU support to the force, as well as the presentation by the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and Head of Mission of the MNJTF, H.E. Amb. Mamman Nuhu; **further taking note** of the statements made by the representative of the Republic of Ghana as the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as by the representative of the Republic of Congo, as the Chair of the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS);

Recalling its previous decisions on the activities of the MNJTF and the situation in the Lake Chad Basin, in particular Communique PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXCVIII) adopted at its 898th held on 28 November 2019, Communique PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXXXIX) adopted at its 489th meeting held on 3 March 2015 and Communique PSC/AHG/COMM. 2(CDLXXXIV) adopted at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015;

Expressing AU's unwavering commitment and support to the MNJTF and **encouraging** MNJTF Forces to remain resolute until the Boko Haram terrorist group is completely eliminated; and

Acting under Article 7 of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council.

1. **Welcomes** the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram;
2. **Commends** the efforts and significant progress made by the MNJTF and the Member countries of Lake Chad Basin Countries (LCBC), namely, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, plus Benin, in the fight against Boko Haram terrorist group, which have significantly degraded the operational capability of the terrorist group, rescued its civilian captives and forced its members to surrender; **emphasizes** that, despite MNJTF successes, Boko Haram still remains a threat for the countries of the region and, hence, the need to redouble efforts to completely eliminate the terrorist group;
3. **Also commends** the efforts made by the MNJTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and the MNJTF personnel, in particular, in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group in the region; **pays tribute** to the brave soldiers and civilians that have paid the ultimate price and **expresses** heartfelt condolences to their families and respective countries of origin;

4. **Strongly condemns** the continued attacks and abuses perpetrated by the Boko Haram terrorist group against innocent civilians which have resulted in destruction of infrastructure and widespread population displacement and exacerbated the serious humanitarian crisis in the region, and **warns** that the perpetrators of these attacks shall be brought to justice;
5. **Expresses deep concern**, once again, over the continued use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) within the MNJTF Area of Operation by Boko Haram in its reconnaissance operations; in this regard, **requests** the Commission, in coordination with the Member States of LCBC plus Benin, to engage with partners and other relevant stakeholders to explore urgently the possibility of more effectively responding to this threat, as well as curtailing any other form of political, military and financial support to the Boko Haram terrorist group;
6. **Notes** the outcomes of the needs assessment exercise carried out by the MNJTF across all its sectors in July 2020, which, having considered the operational area's terrain, threats and available operational capabilities of the force, informed the submission of a list of MNJTF additional requirements broadly covering amphibious capability, civilian/military protection, and communication/surveillance; **requests** the AU Commission to mobilise additional support for the activities of the MNJTF to fill the identified capability gaps, in particular the provision for Counter- Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) equipment, Amphibious Equipment, counter drone equipment, force protection vehicles, surveillance equipment, and Intelligence, Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) services, as well as the necessary resources for Quick Impact and Peace Strengthening Projects and Humanitarian support for the affected population;
7. **Stresses** the need for full implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region, including, as applicable, through the African Union Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Centre, with a view to ensure that development projects are promoted and implemented to alleviate the living conditions of the people in the region; in this regard, **encourages** the countries concerned to implement the Strategy at national level;
8. **Expresses gratitude** to the AU's partners, in particular the European Union, for their continued support to the activities of the MNJTF, including the 60 million Euros to support the MNJTF in the year 2021;
9. **Expresses deep concern** over the humanitarian crisis in the affected areas in the LCB region, which has been accentuated by the effects of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic and, in this respect, **appeals** to all AU Members States and the international community to step up humanitarian support to the affected communities; in the same context, **calls on** the Member States of the LCBC plus Benin to provide the necessary support to the returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), including protection to those who have surrendered from the Boko Haram terrorist group;
10. **Requests** the AU Commission, working closely with the Member States of the LCBC plus Benin and the MNJTF TCCs, to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) between AU, LCBC and MNJTF TCCs in support of MNJTF operations;

11. **Also requests** the AU Commission, working in coordination with the LCBC Secretariat, to report to Council regularly on the activities of the MNJTF, in line with the relevant provisions contained in the Communique PSC/AHG/ COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) of 29 January 2015;
12. **Decides** to renew the mandate of the MNJTF for another period of twelve (12) months, effective from 31 January 2021;
13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.