

African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)



ACSRT OFFICES - ALGIERS

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ACSRT BACKGROUND

The African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) was inaugurated in 2004 with Headquarters in Algiers, Algeria, as a structure of the African Union Commission, in conformity with the Protocol to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The Protocol confers on the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the responsibility for implementing regional, continental and international counter-terrorism instruments as well as harmonizing, standardizing and coordinating continental efforts in the prevention and combating of terrorism.

The establishment of ACSRT is as constituted under Section H, Paragraphs 19 to 21 of the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and pursuant to the relevant decisions adopted by the policy Organs of the Union including in particular,

Assembly/AU/Dec.15 (II); EX.CL/Dec.13 (II); EX/CL/Dec.82 (IV); and EX.CL/Dec.126 (V). The ACSRT was inaugurated on 13 October 2004.

ACSRT PURPOSE

The purpose of the Centre is for it to function as a research centre of excellence in matters concerning the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa. As a structure of the African Union Commission, the centre is to contribute to and strengthen the capacity of the African Union to deal with issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa with the ultimate objective of eliminating the threat posed by terrorism to peace, security, stability and development in Africa. To this end, the Centre conducts research and study into Terrorism. The Centre also maintains a data base, collects and centralizes information, studies and analyses on terrorism and terrorist groups. The Centre also seeks to build counter terrorism capacity in Member States and therefore develops training programs and packages and runs training sessions, workshops, meetings and symposia with the assistance of a myriad of stakeholder partners.

ACSRT MISSION

The mission of the ACSRT is to conduct research and study on Terrorism and develop strategic policy, operational and training mechanisms within the context of International and Continental legal instruments to strengthen the capacity of the African Union and its Member States to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa.

MISSION ATTRIBUTES

The mission of the ACSRT is derived from the OAU Convention (1999), the AU Plan of Action (2002) and the AU protocol of 2004. The mission is in consonance with the tenets of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001), the UN General Assembly Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (2006). It integrates the attributes of Preventive Management of Crisis, the development of capacity for Early Warning and early response and the handling of terrorism related cases in the context of the rule of law and international instruments on human rights.

Within the framework of its activities, and in order to accomplish its mandate, the Centre is designed to function in permanent and continuous coordination with National Focal Points, representing the 54 Member States of the African Union as well as with Regional Focal Points representing the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as provided for in the Modalities for the Functioning of the Centre.¹ The need for Focal Points at the national and regional levels has been emphasized in the Counter-terrorism instruments of the continent mentioned above. The Functioning Modalities of the Centre also call for the Centre to develop cooperation and partnerships with international partners and focal points.

¹Modalities for the Functioning of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (2005). Adopted by the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, Sirte, Libya, July 2005

MANDATE/SPECIFIED TASKS OF THE ACSRT

- a. Assist Member States of the African Union to develop strategies for the prevention and combating of terrorism;
- b. To develop and establish operating procedures for the collection, processing and dissemination of information;
- c. Provide technical and expert advice on the implementation of the African Union counter-terrorism regimes; in particular, the 1999 OAU Convention and the protocol thereto, the Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, as well on the updating and strengthening of policies and programs of the Union relating to counter-terrorism;
- d. Develop and maintain a database on a range of issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism, particularly on terrorist groups and their activities in Africa, as well as on the experts and the technical assistance available. Such database as well as analyses shall be accessible by all the Member States of the Union;
- e. Promote the coordination and standardization of efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity of Member States to prevent and combat terrorism;
- f. Initiate and disseminate research studies and policy analyses periodically, to sensitize Member States, based on current trends, and/or on the demand of Member State(s). The Center shall publish, periodically its research and analysis in an "African Journal for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism";
- g. Develop cooperation and assistance programs with similar and/or interested institutions at the national, regional, continental and international levels, in the areas of research, information collection and analyses on issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism;
- h. Undertake research and converging studies on other global problems with links to terrorism which pose a threat to peace and security in Africa;
- i. Develop capacity for early warning to encourage early response, integrating the concept of Preventive Management of Crises;
- j. Provide technical and expert advice on how best Africa can contribute, in a more meaningful way to the international campaign against terrorism, particularly the implementation of relevant international instruments by the Member States of the African Union;
- k. Undertake studies and make recommendations on strengthening and standardization of legal norms and cooperation in matters of information sharing among Member

States, mutual assistance, extradition, police and border control (including land, maritime and air) in Africa;

- l. Conduct studies and analyses on the best strategies and methods for suppressing the financing of terrorism;
- m. Organize workshops, seminars, symposia and training programs for enhancing the capacity of Member States and Regional Mechanisms in the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa;
- n. Submit annual reports on its activities to the Chairperson of the Commission, for consideration by the Policy Organs of the Union. The annual report shall include financial statement on the activities undertaken in the previous year and the budget of activities envisaged for the next fiscal year.
- o. The Center may also carry out such duties as may be assigned to it by the Commission of the African Union or the Peace and Security Council on matters relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa.

STRUCTURE AND ADVISORY BOARD

The Centre is headed by a Director who reports to the Chairperson of the Commission through the Commissioner for Peace and Security. The Centre is considered part of the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission. The Centre comprises international and local staff. The recruitment of Staff of the Centre is governed by the rules and regulations of the Union. A new Structure for the Centre is currently under consideration for approval within the context of the AU restructuring exercise.

At the level Board, the Director is to be assisted by an Advisory Council, appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission for a one-year renewable term. The composition of the Board includes one (1) representative from each of the five regions and one (1) representative from each of the RECs, drawn from the Focal Points of the Centre, in consultation with Member States and the RECs as well as representatives from the Commission.

The Council serves as a mechanism of the Commission for the periodic review and/or evaluation of the curriculum, programmes, budget and finance, and other operational and administrative aspects of the Centre for the purpose of ensuring the efficient performance, in line with the rules and regulations of the Union. The specified functions of the board are as follows:

- a. Review and assess the curriculum and programmes of the Centre to ensure that they are focused and practicable within a given timeframe, consistent with the mandate and functions of the Centre as contained in the *Modalities for the Functioning of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (2005)*, and up-to-date with prevailing trends on terrorism as well as meet the needs of Member States of the Union;

- b. Review the structure and budget of the Centre vis-à-vis its activities and needs with the view to making recommendations to the policy Organs of the Union;
- c. Make recommendations to the Chairperson of the Commission on how to achieve the maximum performance of the Centre.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of Conduct of the Centre delineates that, given the sensitive nature of the issues addressed by the Center, and in order to safeguard its credibility, the Center shall:

- a. Maintain a degree of confidentiality and stringent security measures in the collection and dissemination of information and data relating to terrorism.
- b. Ensure that the information it publishes or disseminates is reliable and verifiable.
- c. Comply with the academic codes of conduct and ethics governing research and analysis.
- d. Regularly organize seminars for Member states, to raise their awareness, to address major problems and challenges and to foster efforts aiming at preventing and combating terrorism in Africa.