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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

957<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

20 OCTOBER 2020

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLVII)

COMMUNIQUE

## COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 957<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 20 October 2020, on the Impact of Foreign Terrorist Fighters on Peace and Security in Africa:

### The Peace and Security Council,

**Noting** the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for October 2020, H.E Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalek, as well as the statement of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui; **also noting** the presentations made by the Executive Director of the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), Dr. Tarek Sharif, and by the Head of Training at the African Centre for the Research and Study on Terrorism (ACRST), Col. Christian Emmanuel Mouaya Pouyi;

**Deeply concerned by** the growing threat to peace and security in Africa posed by terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism, as well as by the influx of foreign terrorist fighters, which is undermining AU efforts to end violent conflicts and to achieved sustainable peace, security and stability in the Continent; **also deeply concerned by** the growing linkages between terrorism and trans-national organized crime, including money laundering, illicit financial flows, illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, human and drug trafficking as well as the growing threat of terrorism-related cybercrimes and the potentiality of Weapons of Mass Destructions reaching terrorist organizations;

**Recalling** its previous decisions and pronouncements on the fight against the scourge of terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism in Africa, particularly Communiqués [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCMXXXVIII)] adopted at its 838<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 9 April 2019; [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCXII)] adopted at its 812<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 23 November 2018; [PSC/AHG/COMM.(DCCXLIX)] adopted at its 749<sup>th</sup> meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 27 January 2018; [PSC/ AHG/ COMM.1 (DLXXI)] adopted at its 571<sup>st</sup> meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 29 January 2016; and [PSC/AHG/COMM (CDLV)] adopted at its 455<sup>th</sup> meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 2 September 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya;

**Also recalling** all AU instruments on terrorism, particularly Article 7 (1i) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted by the 35<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, from 6 to 8 July 2004, the AU Plan of Action, adopted by the 1<sup>st</sup> AU High- Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, held in Algiers, from 11 to 14 September 2002, as well as the AU Model Law on Anti-Terrorism, which was endorsed by Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.369 (XVII)] adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Malabo, from 30 June to 1 July 2011; and **further recalling** United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution [S/RES/2178 (2014)], which reaffirms that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, constitutes one of the most serious

threats to international peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation whenever and by whomsoever committed;

**Mindful** of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), which clearly states that foreign terrorist fighters pose a serious threat to international peace and security; as well as Security Council Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/11 (2015) which recognized- amongst others- the need to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters; and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Strongly condemns** the continued indiscriminate terrorist attacks in various parts of the Continent and the continued recruitment and state sponsorship of foreign terrorist fighters. In this regard, the Council **notes with deep concern** that some non-African States are sponsors of the surge in influx of Foreign Terrorist Fighters into Africa, and **strongly warns** that the Council will not hesitate to name and shame all those found to be promoting terrorism;
2. **Encourages** all Member States and other relevant stakeholders to fully uphold and comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2170 (2014), which presents a holistic approach towards combating the scourges of foreign terrorist fighters, and **appeals** to the international partners to enhance assistance and collaboration with AU Member States in addressing the growing threat of Foreign Terrorist Fighters, including by sharing of information that assists in identifying FTFs;
3. **Calls for** concerted and sustained efforts by Member States to effectively destroy the financial lifelines of terrorist groups, and fight transnational organized crime, including piracy, kidnap-for-ransom (KFR), drug and human trafficking, money laundering, illicit financial flows, selling of antiquities, and illegal exploitation and selling of natural resources; **emphasizes that** Member States should refrain from payment of ransom to terrorists, in order to discourage terrorist organizations from committing KFR crimes, particularly in conformity with Decision 256 of the Assembly of the African Union (2009);
4. **Welcomes** the efforts being made by the Member States to sustain their efforts in the fight against terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism and **calls** for developing common standards for effectively tracking the networks of terrorism financing in accordance with the relevant AU and international instruments;
5. **Encourages** Member States to further enhance the capacities of their national defence and security institutions in the field of countering terrorism and countering foreign terrorist fighters, including by promoting cross-border inter-agency collaboration and cooperation, and by sharing best practices and experiences, and by conducting joint trainings as well as by developing national strategies aimed at addressing the socio-economic and ideological root causes of terrorism, ensuring that such strategies are inclusive of relevant stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, traditional and religious leaders in the same context;
6. **Appeals** to Member States, in line with Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017), to take all necessary measures in the area of ensuring effective border security, including in the maritime domain, as well as to further strengthen their cooperation and collaboration, among others, through joint operations, joint border commissions, information and intelligence sharing, denial

of safe havens to criminals and terrorists, to further strengthen and harmonize national, regional, continental and international legal instruments, as well as encouraging signing of extradition Treaties;

7. **Encourages** Member States to holistically and comprehensively address the underlying root causes of conflicts and all conditions that are conducive for encouraging FTFs, and the spread of terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism, including abject poverty, youth unemployment, institutionalized socio-economic and political exclusion, marginalization of sections of society based on race, ethnicity, tribal or religious grounds; in this regard, **also encourages** Member States to ensure exercise effective full State authority and control over their respective territories and to re-double their efforts in addressing root causes of conducive environments for FTFs and terrorism;

8. **Welcome** the efforts by AFRIPOL to utilize the African Police Communication System (AFSECOM) of AFRIPOL, through national police focal points, to facilitate easy and secure communication, and sharing of information and data among the police agencies of AU Member States; **calls upon** the Commission to support AFRIPOL efforts to establish an AFRIPOL Forensic Laboratory on Documents and Biometrics to combat document fraud, Ballistics and Digital evidence, in full consultation with national police focal points of AU Member States;

9. **Commends** the AU Commission, particularly the ACRST for the continued provision of technical assistance and capacity building support to Member States, with a view to facilitating effective implementation of the AU Counter-Terrorism Framework; **also commends** AFRIPOL for its continued assistance to Member States in the fight against transnational organized crime and **underscores the importance** of Member States to fully cooperate with these institutions and to redouble efforts in mobilizing required resources for these two critical Continental institutions to more effectively discharge their respective mandates.

10. **Requests** the AU Commission, the AFRIPOL and the ACRST, to develop a comprehensive “guideline framework for countering FTFs”, as well as to expedite the development of a “database” of persons, entities or organizations involved in or supporting, in any form, the activities of terrorist organizations, including the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters in line with Security Council Resolution 2396 (2017), while ensuring that the “comprehensive framework” and the “database” must be developed in close and full collaboration with African Union Member States and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution;

11. **Decides** to dedicate an annual session to assess progress in the Continental efforts in combating the scourge of terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism, as well as foreign terrorist fighters;

12. **Also decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.