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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 749TH MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA 27 JANUARY 2018

PSC/AHG/COM.(DCCXLIX)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 749th meeting held on 27 January 2018, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the theme: "Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Combatting the Transnational Threat of Terrorism in Africa", adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the statements made by H.E. President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chairperson of the PSC for the month of January 2018 and H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, as well as by H.E. Antonio Guterres, the Secretary- General of the United Nations. Council **also takes note** of the briefing made by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui, on a comprehensive approach to combatting the transnational threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Council **further takes note** of the statement made by H.E. Ahmed Ouyahia, the Prime Minister of the People s Democratic Republic of Algeria, on behalf of H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in his capacity as the Leader on the Thorny Issue of Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa. Council **further takes note** of the presentation made by Mr. Shimelis W. Semayat, the Executive Secretary of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA);
2. **Reiterates its strong condemnation** of all terrorist acts, methods, practices and incitements, regardless of the pretext under which they are committed. Council **also reiterates its strong condemnation** of violent extremist ideologies and narratives, and **recognizes** the integral role of these phenomena in the ultimate execution of terrorist acts. Council **stresses the imperative** of combating all sort of extremism and hate speech, wherever they emanate from;
3. **Recalls** all its previous decisions and pronouncements on terrorism and violent extremism, particularly, Press Statement PSC/PR/BR. (DCCXI) adopted at its 711th meeting held on 22 August 2017; Communique PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLXXXVII) adopted at its 687th meeting held on 23 May 2017; Communique PSC/PR/COMM. (DCL), adopted at its 650th meeting held on 17 January 2017; Communique PSC/PR/ COMM. 1 (DCXXVIII) adopted at its 628th meeting held on 28 September 2016; Press Statement PSC/PR/BR.(DCXXVII) adopted at its 627th meeting, open session, held on 26 September 2016; Press Statement PSC/PR/BR (DXCII) adopted at its 592nd meeting held on 19 April 2016; Communique PSC/AHG/ COMM.1 (DLXXI) adopted at its meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 29 January 2017; and Press Statement PSC/PR/BR.2 (DLX) adopted at its 560th meeting held on 26 November 2016; as well as Communique PSC/AHG/COMM (CDLV) adopted at its 455th meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 2 September 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya;
4. **Takes note with deep concern**, of the immense threats to peace and security emanating from the upsurge of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization in Africa;

5. **Emphasizes** that terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization cannot be exclusively associated with any one single religion, ethnicity, sect or tribe and that they undermine the moral fabric of societies;
6. **Underscores** the AU's continued commitment to inclusive approaches and African ownership, within the context of African solutions to the problems plaguing the continent, as well as Africa's commitment to the international counter-terrorism regime as outlined in relevant OAU/AU treaties and conventions, UN Security Council resolutions, and the UN Global Counter- Terrorism Strategy;
7. **Encourages** Member States to develop their own comprehensive national counter terrorism strategies focusing on prevention, as well as on timely and swift responses to any terrorist acts. In the same context, Council **also encourages** Member States to adopt holistic approaches in addressing the root causes of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, focusing particular attention to the plight of the youth and marginalized sections of society;
8. **Stresses the importance** of coordination and complementarity of efforts among Member States and all relevant regional and international actors in preventing and countering terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. In the same context, Council **also stresses, once again**, the importance of inter-regional continental and international forums of cooperation in the prevention and combating of terrorism, based on comprehensive and evidence-based approaches, within the overall context of practical steps of silencing the guns in Africa by the year 2020;
9. **Further stresses the need** for constructively engaging a broad range of actors in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, including leaders of various religious groups, community leaders, traditional leaders, educational institutions, civil society groups, the media and internet service providers, as well as the youth and women;
10. **Commends** CISSA, the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for their relentless efforts in supporting Member States in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization in Africa;
11. **Also commends** the contributions of H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, to the regional and global efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. In this regard, Council **welcomes** his nomination as the Leader on the Thorny Issue of Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa and **congratulates** him for the achievements made to date regarding this important subject;
12. **Takes note** of the progress made by the AU Commission in implementing Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.614 establishing the AU Special Fund on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa adopted by the 27th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Kigali, in July 2016, and **calls upon** Member States and international partners to make contributions to the Fund,

once it is operationalized;

13. **Expresses deep concern** over the threat posed by the return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) from conflict zones outside the continent back to their countries of origin in Africa, or to other Member States, where they may seek refuge with other terrorist groups on the ground. In this regard, Council **requests** the AU Commission and partners to continue to assist Member States in building and further strengthening their national capacities, in order to enable them to more effectively deal with this threat;

14. **Calls upon** Member States to take the required measures to dry up the flow of terrorism financing, by cutting the links between terrorist organizations and organized crime, including trafficking, smuggling and illicit trade. In this regard, Council **underscores the need** for continued enhancement of cooperation between and among national security and intelligence agencies of Member States, particularly financial intelligence units, in order to enable them to more effectively combat all forms of financial crimes, such as money laundering and the payment of ransom to terrorist groups. In the same context, Council **urges** Member States to pay particular attention to the exploitation of charity organizations as a cover to promote terrorism;

15. **Calls for** the mobilization of all the components of the African Peace and Security Architecture in efforts aimed at preventing and combatting terrorism in Africa. In this respect, Council **stresses the need** to strengthen cross border cooperation and information sharing between Member States' Intelligence Units, including within the framework of the Nouakchott and Djibouti processes, the different regional fusion centers and AFRIPOL;

16. **Further calls for** the immediate operationalization of the Sub-Committee on Counter Terrorism;

17. **Recalls** paragraph 16(a) of the Plan of Action of the African Union High-Level Inter- Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in 2002, requesting for the development of a list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts, that will be publicized and regularly updated. In this regard, Council **encourages** the PSC Counter Terrorism Sub-Committee, once activated, to develop, with the facilitation of the AU

Commission, an African watch-list composed of a database of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts, including FTFs, for use by law enforcement, border security, customs, military, and intelligence agencies in addition to AFRIPOL;

18. **Encourages** Member States to actively participate in the listing of terrorist fighters in the African watch-list, once it is established, and the United Nations Security Council by availing any relevant information to the concerned Sub-Committee;

19. **Recalls, once again,** Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCXXVII)]of its 627th meeting held on 26 September 2016 on the role of cybersecurity in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in

Africa; **reaffirms** the need to counter the use of ICT technologies by terrorist groups, whether in their fundraising, narrative promotion, and recruitment of others to commit terrorist acts; **welcomes**, in this context, UNSC resolution 2354 (2017) and the "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives" (S/2017/375) with recommended guidelines and good practices; and **encourages** Member States to collaborate in developing and implementing effective counter-narrative strategies in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2354 (2017), including those relating to FTFs;

20. **Welcomes, once again**, the proposal made by Egypt to host an African Event to further discuss the Egyptian Initiative to start an African Dialogue with a view to combating terrorism online and securing cyberspace;

21. **Calls upon** the international community, through individual Member States, Specialized Agencies and Units of the UN, to undertake its responsibilities in assisting AU Member States in identifying areas where they may need technical assistance and capacity-building, in order to meet the challenges of transnational terrorism in light of the unprecedented threats it poses to peace and security in the continent and globally;

22. **Urges** all Member States, particularly those which have not yet done so, to urgently sign, ratify and domesticate all AU instruments and other relevant international counter-terrorism instruments. Council **also urges** Member States to scrupulously implement Communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) adopted at its 455th meeting, at the level of Heads of State and Government, held on 2 September 2014, in Nairobi, Kenya;

23. **Commends** the role played by the African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) in promoting and defending common African positions in UN Security Council decisions on the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, including resolutions 2354, 2370 and 2396 (2017);

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