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United Nations Security Council Open Debate
Remarks by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye,
Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security
On

**"African-led and development-focused counter-terrorism:
strengthening African leadership and implementation of
counter-terrorism initiatives"**

New York, USA

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Mr President,

Deputy Secretary-General, of the United Nations,

The gravity of the threat caused by the exponential growth of terrorism in Africa is overwhelming and startling.

In 2024 alone, the African Union Counter-Terrorism Centre (AUCTC) recorded over **3,400** terrorist attacks on the continent. These attacks resulted in over **13,900** fatalities. Indeed, this is a damning

challenge facing Africa. We have reached a tipping point and we must act together in response.

Terrorism and violent extremism derail development opportunities for the youth and communities, thereby breaking down the fabric of African society, and denting the abiding confidence of the social contract of the Nation-State with the people. The consequences are enormous, complex, and severe. These non-state armed groups impede the full functioning of democratic governance and halt the pathway to inclusive growth in Africa. In effect, the continent's lofty aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030, are in jeopardy if our collective response is not effective.

Strategic Approaches by the AU

With the geography of terrorism in Africa now engulfing the five regions, for the first time in half a century, the African Union has recalibrated its strategic approach to the dynamics of terrorism. We are also retooling the policy instruments especially given projections of a 10 – 15 percent escalation in terrorism in 2025.

The African Union has developed active frameworks that are founded in the principles of African ownership and leadership. As the threat grows, we refocus on building more integrated capabilities for both AU MS & Regional Mechanisms. We are equally mobilizing the full range

of resources through smart and value-driven partnerships to defeat this scourge. The AU is thus responding swiftly and effectively by implementing the Silencing the Guns by 2030 programme.

Back in 1999, the giant first step of adopting the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combat of Terrorism was taken. While the world stood still as Somalia bled in the early 2000s, the AU stepped in to save Somalia and the Horn of Africa from the lawless and dastardly acts of Al Shabaab. With the strong support of the EU and the UN, the legacies of AMISOM and ATMIS are going to shape the newly established AUSSOM.

Development-Based Counterterrorism Approach

In May 2022 African leaders exhibited strong political will through the Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and UCGs. Likewise the Abuja High Level Meeting on CT of April 2024 was instructive. They demonstrated the spirit of African Solutions to African Problems that works for all. The Malabo Declaration underscored the imperative to embrace multidimensional approaches to achieve peace, security, and sustainable development.

The AU-led and mandated Counterterrorism missions are testaments that Africa-driven peace support operations can safeguard our independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. The MnJTF in Lake Chad and AUSSOM in Somalia also form strategic pathways to

peacebuilding and promoting socio-economic development in post-conflict settings. These models are not merely beneficial but essential for Africa's future.

The African Union's Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery, and Resilience of the Lake Chad Basin remains a prime example of linking security with development. The results are encouraging with the safe return of displaced individuals and the rebuilding of critical social infrastructure within affected communities.

Furthermore, the AU is promoting the Peace, Security, and Development Nexus approach in collaboration with AUDA0-NEPAD, UN, and international partners.

Mr President

With barely 5 years to the end of the SDGs and about 38 years to Agenda 2063, we must sharpen our strategies to accelerate the achievement of the goals and aspirations represented in both agendas.

Strengthening African Leadership

Mr President,

At the centre of strengthening African Leadership to result in development-focused counterterrorism the AU is promoting:

- i. Revitalization of the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes on intelligence gathering and sharing;

- ii. Refocusing the African Union Counter-Terrorism Centre (AUCTC), and reclassifying it as a centre of excellence embracing the whole of society and whole of government approach;
- iii. Under I-RECKE for early warning and conflict prevention, the AU is fostering regional and continental efforts in combating terrorism
- iv. The AU has started the elaboration of a new Continental Strategic Plan of Action to ensure that inter and intra-regional counterterrorism is sustainable;
- v. A collaborative approach at the national and regional levels to address the use of new technologies and financing methods by terrorists and violent extremists. It is a topmost priority to address the resilience of these non-state actors. In this regard, a comprehensive study is ongoing towards robust measures to curb their continued access to funds;
- vi. Empowering local institutions, fostering regional cooperation, and prioritizing socioeconomic development, African countries can effectively address the root causes of terrorism and build resilient communities

The Imperative for Adequate Means of Implementation

The African Union and the United Nations, particularly the UNSC and AUPSC should jointly support predictable, sustainable, and flexible funding for peace enforcement in counter-terrorism contexts. The swift activation of UNSC Resolution 2719 (2023) would be a significant step forward for the African Union in its efforts to combat terrorism across the continent. The AU reaffirms its full support for the operationalization of the 2719 framework resolution

At this juncture, permit me to recognize the efforts of **H.E. Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE**, President of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Algeria in his capacity as AU Champion for Combating Terrorism. Algeria continues to lead advocacy for all AU efforts dedicated to combating terrorism. The AU PSC, the A3+ in the UNSC continue to engage regularly through the "Oran Process" to renew African leadership to defeat both the ideology of hate and its killing machine.

Conclusion

Mr President,

In conclusion, robust and collective urgent action must be our "North Star" to serve as the guiding light, in combating the pervasive persistent global threat posed by terrorism. We have reached a turning point in the fight against terrorism. Africa cannot be the epicenter of global terrorism but must change its course to become the leading

continent for effective development-focused counterterrorism. Terrorism is antithetical to our hard-won freedom & liberation. Africa cannot be a homecoming for terrorists, and rebels.

Reinforcing African leadership and a development-focused approach to counterterrorism is fundamental for sustainable peace and security. This strategic direction enhances security and promotes self-reliance and prosperity, ensuring a safer and more stable future for all.

I thank you for your kind attention.