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SC23924
24/8/17

ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION
Thirty-Second Ordinary Session
10 - 11 February 2019
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

Assembly/AU/17(XXXII)
Original: French

**REPORT OF HIS EXCELLENCY ABDELAZIZ BOUTEFLIKA,
PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
ALGERIA AND LEADER ON THE ISSUE OF COMBATING
TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA**

**REPORT OF HIS EXCELLENCY ABDELAZIZ BOUTEFLIKA, PRESIDENT
OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA AND
LEADER ON THE ISSUE OF COMBATING TERRORISM
AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA**

1. During the past year, the terrorist threat did not lessen on the African Continent, despite the mobilization of substantial means and resources by a growing number of countries. The wave of terrorist attacks continued at a steady pace, with loss of increasing numbers of innocent lives. The space affected by this scourge has unfortunately expanded. New countries have been affected, while others have taken additional precautionary measures to guard against possible terrorist attacks.
2. The various terrorist groups operating in certain parts of the Continent remain active and continue to threaten peace, security, stability and social cohesion, particularly in the Sahel-Saharan region. While maintaining the specificity of their organization and objectives, these groups keep changing their modes of operation. They work towards pooling their means and resources.
3. These groups invest more in the use and control of social networks and the internet. They use, just as much, the Darknet and multiple encrypted platforms, especially for their communications. The new information and communication technologies, which Africa legitimately aims to develop for the purpose of generating progress in countries and for enhancing accessibility of the populations to knowledge and information, are thus diverted from their noble objectives by the terrorist groups that use them as vectors for propagating their destructive ideology and violent extremism.
4. Radicalization, particularly among the young people, is gaining ground, including among the economically disadvantaged segments of the population. In order to mobilize, sensitize and recruit members, terrorist groups are increasingly resorting to financial incentives. They are also exploiting to their advantage the local conflicts that exist between people over land, economic, social, cultural or ethnic issues. The relationship between terrorism and transnational organized crime has grown to alarming proportions. Although they are driven by different objectives, these two scourges have a common purpose that serves their respective interests, which is to weaken State institutions, reduce their capacity to assume their responsibilities for protecting property and people and to maintain the State authority over all parts of national territories.
5. Terrorist groups are increasingly involved in criminal activities related to the trafficking of drugs, weapons and cultural property, as well as to illegal migration, counterfeiting, smuggling, gold panning, exploitation of natural resources and minerals, cattle theft, trade of all kinds, including fish, as well as piracy.
6. The growing number of foreign terrorist fighters, either of African or non-African origin, has been observed in various parts of the Continent, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict. These individuals who have been trained ideologically and militarily compound the threat that terrorism poses to Africa. The vast nature of national

territories, the porous state of borders and the low combat capacity are factors that terrorist groups exploit to their advantage as they expand their activities.

7. Women and children have increasingly become prime targets for terrorist groups which seek to recruit them and make them to carry out their criminal attacks. The serenity of the family unit has not been spared by these groups which increasingly seek to make them join, willy-nilly, in the terrorist adventure, without caring about whether or not the family unit breaks up.

8. Trafficking in small arms and light weapons, in addition to other arms trafficking, results in a profusion of such weapons on the continent that terrorist groups and transnational organized criminals take advantage of to boost their capacity to harm. The proliferation of these weapons is another source of threat to peace, stability and security on the African Continent.

9. Furthermore, the persistence of military conflicts and the absence of definitive solutions to these conflicts create spaces of insecurity and instability which favour the development and expansion of terrorism and the activities of terrorist groups.

10. The moral, cultural and identity values that constitute the bases and foundations on which the existence and common life of populations are grounded have been regularly subjected to insidious attacks by extremist and terrorist propaganda, which sow doubts in one's beliefs, creates and stirs fear in the other person, fosters mistrust, and makes difference and diversity appear as threats, not as wealth.

11. Socio-economic development is hindered in many parts of our Continent by this worsening terrorist threat. As a result of the climate of fear and psychosis they create, acts of terrorism increasingly impede efforts by African countries and the populations to improve their living conditions. They also retard, or even lead to cancellation of, investment projects, which African countries badly need, as they obstruct other economic activities, including tourism, and cause foreign expertise to leave the country.

12. Faced with these scourges, Africa, through the African Union and its various institutions, as well as the African countries directly affected, have shown great resilience and determination in combating them, either individually or collectively, until they are completely eliminated and the threat that they currently constitute for the security and well-being of their respective populations, as well as for peace and regional and international security disappears.

13. Undoubtedly, Africa has already made significant progress in this direction. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the adoption, in 1999, by the 35th Summit of African Heads of State and Government meeting in Algiers, of the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, and subsequently, in 2004, of the Additional Protocol to this Convention, which enhanced its scope in combating terrorism, as well as the adoption of the African Union Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, which served as a roadmap for organizing and harmonizing national and continental counter-terrorism efforts.

14. The establishment, that same year, of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT/CAERT), with headquarters in Algiers, which has since established itself as a continental reference in combating terrorism, the adoption of the African Model Anti-Terrorism Law, as well as the establishment, in 2011, of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), also based in Algiers, are all achievements in line with this same approach of strengthening the capacities of our Continent in its fight against the scourges of terrorism and violent extremism.

15. African countries have, for the most part, developed or strengthened their national capacities to combat the scourges of terrorism and violent extremism. Several legislative, regulatory and security measures, as well as specialized training programmes tailored to these new threats, have been gradually put in place. Equipment has been acquired and technical assistance programmes are now in place to better pre-empt and prevent terrorism threats.

16. The African Union, as well as sub-regional organizations, have established and developed many cooperation programmes, including awareness-raising, experience and information sharing, intelligence exchange, specialized training and technical assistance.

17. Affirming the importance it attaches to the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism to the African Continent and to the serenity and tranquillity of its peoples, and expressing its firm determination to resolutely combat these scourges until their total eradication, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union decided in 2017 to establish the High Mission of Coordinator to Fight Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa, and entrusted it to His Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and to appoint him Leader of Africa on this important issue.

18. As part of this high mission, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika submitted a Memorandum to his African Peers in which he presented the pillars around which the African Union could organize the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

19. This document, which was published as an official document of the African Union under the reference "Assembly/AU/6(XXIX)", defines seven main pillars for this joint action by the Continent against the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, namely:

- The development of the African framework for combating violent extremism and terrorism;
- The development and enhancement of African standards for the prevention and fight against violent extremism and terrorism;
- Addressing the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and their return or movement to the African continent;
- The tightening and drying up of the many sources of terrorist financing, including the informal sector;

- The prevention and fight against radicalization, as well as de-radicalization policies;
- The promotion of political, institutional and judicial frameworks that foster democracy, good governance, human rights, the rule of law, social justice and socio-economic development;
- The strengthening of regional and international cooperation.

20. This initiative has been reinforced by the holding of three African Union conferences, organized jointly with Algeria, devoted to different dimensions of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, all of which took place in Algiers. The first two were held in December 2017 and focused respectively on the fight against terrorism in Africa and on the role of women in mediation. The third was held on 9 and 10 April 2018, and addressed the issue of combating the financing of terrorism in Africa. The conclusions of these conferences, attended by African Union Member States and guest partners, were submitted to the Heads of State and Government for their consideration, and made available to Member States for use and exploitation.

21. Regarding the future action of the African Union in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, the Coordinator proposed to his peers at the January 2018 Summit many avenues for work in multiple areas, as well as the development of a new African Union action plan that take into account the new challenges posed by the change and evolution in the nature and scope of the terrorist threat.

22. This Plan, which shall replace the Plan adopted in 2004, shall address the seven pillars of work listed in the aforementioned Memorandum and shall focus, *inter alia*, on adhering to the African instruments to combat terrorism, adapting national legislation to the new requirements of this fight, the implementation of socio-economic policies and governance that address the factors of marginalization and vulnerability in societies, the strengthening of the capacities of institutions, particularly judicial institutions, in charge of the fight against terrorism, and the improvement of coordination between these institutions, strengthening the rule of law and democracy, setting up rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, drying up domestic and international sources of funding, and lastly, promoting further bilateral, regional and international cooperation in this fight.

23. This document shall be prepared by the African Commission, under the aegis of the Coordinator for Combating Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Africa, and in conformity with the working rules and procedures in force within the African Union.

24. This document shall be validated by an African Union Ministerial Conference that may be convened during the second half of 2019, and adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at their January 2020 Session.

2019-02-10

Report of his Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika, president of the people's democratic republic of Algeria and Leader on the issue of Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa

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