

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 519321

Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
484TH MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
29 JANUARY 2015**

PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV)

COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015, at the level of Heads of State and Government, adopted the following decision on regional and international efforts to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group and the way forward:

Council:

1. **Takes note** of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on regional and international efforts to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group and the way forward [PSC/AHG/2(CDLXXXIV)], as well as of the statements made by the representatives of the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission – LCBC (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria) and by Ghana, as the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
2. **Recalls** its earlier pronouncements on the activities of Boko Haram and the efforts to be undertaken to neutralize this terrorist group, including communiqué PSC/PR/COMM/2. (CDXXXVI), the relevant provisions of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) and communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIX) adopted at its 436th, 455th and 469th meetings held on 23 May, 2 September and 25 November 2014, respectively. Council **also recalls** the relevant provisions of Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.356(XXIII) adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its 23rd Ordinary Session, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 27 to 28 June 2014;
3. **Reiterates the AU's strong condemnation** of the horrendous terrorist attacks committed by Boko Haram, including killings of civilians, kidnappings, hostage taking, pillaging and destruction of civilian property, sexually-based violence and other abuses. In this respect, Council **notes with deep concern** the most recent escalation by Boko Haram of its attacks, notably the mass killings committed in Baga, Borno State, which may constitute a crime against humanity, and the 10 and 11 January 2015 suicide bombings in Maiduguri, Borno State, and Potiskum, Yobe State, reportedly involving children coerced by Boko Haram to act as suicide bombers;
4. **Further notes with deep concern** that the attacks and other abuses committed by Boko Haram have led to massive internal displacement, as well as to significant population flows from the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States of Nigeria into Cameroon, Chad and Niger, straining resources in the host countries and creating risks of tension between refugees and host communities;
5. **Renews AU's solidarity** with the Governments and people of Nigeria and those of the other countries directly affected by the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council **expresses deep sympathy** to the families of the victims of Boko Haram's criminal and terrorist acts, as well as to the families of those injured;
6. **Reaffirms** that the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group constitute a serious threat, not only to Nigeria and the region, but also to the entire continent. Accordingly, Council **underlines** the duty and obligation of Africa, as a whole, to extend all the necessary support to the LCBC Member States and Benin, in keeping with the principles of African solidarity and indivisibility of peace and security on the continent, as enshrined in the relevant AU instruments, including the 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, the 2003 Common

African Defense and Security Policy and the 2005 AU Non-Aggression and Common African Defense Pact;

7. **Commends, once again**, the Member States of the LCBC and Benin for their sustained efforts to enhance effectiveness in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group and **welcomes**, in this respect, the conclusions of the 5th ministerial meeting of the countries of the region held in Niamey, Niger, on 20 January 2015, building on the outcomes of earlier meetings, including the ministerial meetings that took place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 3 September and 13 October 2014, and the Summit that took place in Niamey on 7 October 2014. Council **notes with satisfaction** the practical steps agreed upon by the Niamey meeting of 20 January 2015, notably the establishment of the Headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and that of a secure communications network for the security forces operating in and around the Lake Chad Basin;

8. **Recognizes** the ongoing efforts by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to curb the threats posed by Boko Haram, and **welcomes** the pledge made by Nigeria to contribute resources towards strengthening the MNJTF, as part of the collective efforts to end this threat;

9. **Pays tribute** to the Government of the Republic of Chad for having deployed troops in Northern Cameroon to assist Cameroonian soldiers in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group, as a further demonstration of Chad's commitment and exemplary contribution to the promotion of peace and security on the African continent, as illustrated earlier by Chad's huge sacrifices towards the liberation of Northern Mali from terrorist and criminal groups;

10. **Welcomes** the steps taken by the Commission, in response to the request made by the LCBC Member States and Benin at the Niamey meeting of 20 January 2015, to convene, in Yaoundé, Cameroun, from 5 to 7 February 2015, a meeting of experts, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, to finalize the concept of operation for the MNJTF and other related documents, including command and control, the support concept, the rules of engagement and guidelines on the protection of civilians that mainstream the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP). Council **notes** the request made by the Niamey ministerial meeting for the CONOPS to be flexible, so as to facilitate the provision, within the framework of the MNJTF, of timely support to bilateral and trilateral arrangements;

11. **Decides**, in support to the efforts of the LCBC Member States and Benin, and as requested by their Niamey ministerial meeting and recommended by the Chairperson of the Commission in paragraphs 19 to 22 of her report, to authorize the deployment of the MNJTF, for an initial period of twelve months renewable and for a strength that could go up to 7,500 military and other personnel, with the following mandate :

- i. create a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, in order to significantly reduce violence against civilians and other abuses, including sexual- and gender-based violence, in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and the UN HRDDP;

- ii. facilitate the implementation, by the LCBC Member States and Benin, of overall stabilization programmes in the affected areas, including the full restoration of State authority and the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; and
- iii. facilitate, within the limit of its capabilities, humanitarian operations and the delivery of assistance to the affected populations.

12. **Further decides** that, within the framework of the mandate outlined above, the MNJTF contingents shall, in particular, carry out the following tasks:

- i. conduct military operations to prevent the expansion of Boko Haram and activities of other terrorist groups, and eliminate their presence;
- ii. facilitate operational coordination amongst the affected countries in the fight against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, including on the basis of intelligence collected by the LCBC Member States and Benin and/or availed by external partners;
- iii. encourage and facilitate the conduct of joint/simultaneous/coordinated patrols and other types of operations at the borders of the affected countries;
- iv. prevent all forms of transfer of arms and ammunition and other types of support to Boko Haram and other terrorist groups;
- v. ensure, within its capabilities, the protection of civilians under immediate threat, IDP and refugee camps, humanitarian workers and other civilian personnel;
- vi. actively search for, and free all abductees, including the young girls abducted in Chibok, Borno State, in April 2014;
- vii. undertake effective psychological operations to encourage defections from Boko Haram and other terrorist groups;
- viii. support, as may be appropriate, the initial implementation phase of strategies for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of disengaged fighters into their communities ;
- ix. contribute to the improvement and institutionalization of civil-military coordination, including the provision, upon request, of escorts to humanitarian convoys;
- x. support regional efforts to arrest and bring to justice all those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity; and
- xi. ensure the protection of the MNJTF personnel, facilities and equipment.

13. **Welcomes** the adoption by the UN Security Council, on 19 January 2015, of a presidential statement, calling, *inter-alia*, for an increased international support to enhance the operational capacity of the MNJTF. Council **urges** the UN Security Council, upon receipt of this communiqué and the CONOPS referred to in paragraph 10 above, to urgently adopt a resolution that would, in line with the request made by the LCBC Member States and Benin at their Abuja meeting of 13 October 2014: (i) endorse the deployment of the MNJTF, (ii) authorize the establishment by the Secretary-General of a Trust Fund for the sustenance of the MNJTF operations, and (iii) call for the provision of international support to the MNJTF and other related efforts against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups;
14. **Commends** the bilateral and multilateral partners extending support to the countries of the region and **encourages** them to enhance their support, and **calls on** AU Member States and other members of the international community to extend all necessary support to the efforts of the Member States of the LCBC and Benin, including financial and logistical assistance, equipment, as well as enhanced and timely intelligence sharing support, to facilitate the early and full operationalization of the MNJTF. Council **requests** the Commission to organize, by mid-March 2015 and with the support of the UN, a Donors' Conference to facilitate the mobilization of the required resources;
15. **Calls for** the urgent provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations and the countries hosting Nigerian refugees. Council **requests** the Sub-Committee of the Permanent Representative's Committee on Refugees, IDPs and Humanitarian Affairs to urgently undertake a visit to the region, in order to assess the situation and make recommendations on how best to mobilize, from within the continent, additional support to complement the assistance being provided by international partners;
16. **Stresses** that, in addition to the much-needed military and security operations against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, sustained national, regional and international efforts should also be deployed towards the improvement of livelihoods, education and job creation, as well as towards the protection of human rights, including those of women and girls, so as to address alienation and marginalization as conditions conducive to violent extremism. In this respect, Council **expresses support** to the LCBC Strategy to combat Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, and **appeals** for the mobilization of the required financial and technical support towards the implementation of the Strategy;
17. **Recalls** the decision of the UN Security Council's Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of 22 May 2014 that approved the addition of Boko Haram to its list of individuals and entities subject to targeted financial sanctions, and **stresses** the importance of this decision as an effective tool towards eliminating the group and denying it access to resources to carry out its criminal and terrorist activities;
18. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit this communiqué to the UN Security Council and other AU partners, for their support and action as appropriate;
19. **Further requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to provide monthly updates to Council on the implementation of this communiqué;
20. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.