

**Security Council**

Distr.: General  
2 November 2022

Original: English

---

**Letter dated 1 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that as President of the Security Council for the month of November 2022, Ghana will convene a high-level debate with Heads of State and Government entitled “Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development”, under the agenda item “Threats to international peace and security”. The debate will be held on Thursday, 10 November 2022 at 10 a.m.

I have enclosed herewith a concept note we have prepared to guide the discussions during the debate (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Harold A. Agyeman  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 1 November 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

### **Concept note for the Security Council high-level debate on the subject “Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development”**

#### **Introduction**

In its capacity as President of the United Nations Security Council for the month of November 2022, Ghana will hold a high-level debate entitled “Counter-terrorism in Africa: an imperative for peace, security and development”, under the agenda item “Threats to international peace and security”.

#### **Objective**

The high-level debate seeks to focus attention on ongoing counter-terrorism measures in Africa and how best the Security Council could support such efforts, including through adequate, predictable and sustainable financing. The debate will also look at how the Security Council could work with regional arrangements to address the terrorism menace.

#### **Context**

Terrorism and violent extremism represent the greatest threat to international peace and security today. They threaten regions and contribute to the increasing numbers of displacement and mortality globally. The Institute of Economics and Peace, in its 2022 Global Terrorism Index, reveals a 17 per cent increase in terrorist attacks in 2021, with deaths declining only marginally (1.2 per cent). It is estimated that the economic cost of those attacks in the past two decades is about \$855 billion, further affirming that inaction has an economic penalty which derails efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in countries that repeatedly fall victim to the myriad of attacks carried out by terrorists and violent extremists.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past two decades, the African continent has experienced an influx of terrorist groups, whose ultimate aim is to take advantage of the security vacuum in territories with inadequate State authority to establish their own presence. Their presence has been witnessed in places such as the Sahel, Lake Chad basin, north-east Nigeria, northern Mozambique, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Somalia. Of the 7,000 terrorist-related deaths recorded in 2021, close to half (48 per cent) of the deaths have occurred in Africa, according to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index report.

Increasingly, extremist groups have developed the capacity to finance their operations through illicit international networks and transnational crimes such as trafficking in persons, piracy and mercenary activities. More worryingly, in West Africa, for example, the attacks in the coastal areas have been described as “a tip of the insurgency iceberg” given the potential and the ambition of terrorist organizations to expand their reach beyond the Sahel until they can control territories in other parts of West Africa.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harrison Bardwell and Mohib Iqbal, “The economic impact of terrorism from 2000 to 2018”, *Journal of Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy*, vol. 27, No. 2, 2021, pp. 227–261.

<sup>2</sup> Sampson Kwarkye, “West African coastal terror attacks: just the tip of the iceberg”, *Institute for Security Studies*, 9 March 2022.

The increase in terrorist attacks confirms that response to terrorism in the region has not matched the increasing sophistication of terrorists and violent extremists. Numerous counter-terrorism operations and mechanisms, including the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the Multinational Joint Task Force, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the 2020–2024 action plan for the eradication of terrorism in the Economic Community of West African States region, the Accra Initiative and other regional and continental instruments have not yielded the expected results because of the volume of resources required, as well as challenges with capabilities.

The funding shortfall for counter-terrorism operations in Africa affects both the effectiveness of military responses and non-kinetic measures, including responses to the underlying causes of conflict, terrorism and violent extremism such as climate change, weak community and development resilience, illiteracy, poverty and absence of State presence.

It is in this regard that the African Union at its most recent extraordinary session in Malabo, held on 28 May 2022, acknowledged the funding and structural challenges in the terrorism fight and called for adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for counter-terrorism efforts on the continent. The declaration of the summit renewed its request to the United Nations to use assessed contributions for African Union – mandated peace operations to strengthen counter-terrorism efforts. The call by the Secretary-General for a mechanism to deal with terrorist groups and the creation of a standing African Standby Force, funded with assessed contributions, becomes pertinent.

### **Guiding questions**

1. How can United Nations missions in Africa better support regional counter-terrorism efforts?
2. In what ways can the United Nations support the building of resilience among Member States to curb the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel region and coastal West Africa?
3. Which sustainable funding mechanism can be leveraged towards supporting resilience building against terrorism in the Sahel region and coastal West Africa?

### **Format**

The debate will be chaired by the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres will deliver a statement. The following speakers will brief the Security Council:

- (a) Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat
- (b) Representative of the European Union (President of the European Council), Charles Michel
- (c) President of the International Crisis Group, Comfort Ero

The debate is only for members of the Security Council.