



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya

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UN SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE ON COUNTER
TERRORISM IN AFRICA – AN IMPERATIVE FOR PEACE,
SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2022 (10AM)

STATEMENT BY AMB MICHAEL KIBOINO

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

Thank you, Mr. President,

I thank H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, H.E. Charles Michel, and Ms. Comfort Ero for their briefings.

As we debate this important threat, terrorist affiliates to Al Qaeda and ISIS are expanding in multiple regions in Africa. They are embedded in local, national and cross-border conflicts while retaining key strategic links with global networks. They are capitalising on instability caused by insufficient governance, local grievances, and humanitarian emergencies caused by extreme weather patterns partly due to climate change. States are hard pressed to provide robust security and

basic services, lacking capacity, political stability, and the financial resources to overcome the challenge.

In the Sahel and West Africa, the terrorist threat is escalating and expanding its footprint. Multiple countries are under threat. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo have all been attacked with varying levels of intensity. Neighbouring countries are also on the firing line.

Different strategies have been developed, most only being partially implemented. MINUSMA in Mali has done as well as it could given its mandate and resources, but nowhere close to degrading the threat to an acceptable level.

The G5 Sahel initiative stands as a shadow of the hopes the people and governments of the region placed in it. Forces by countries partnering with the region also appear inadequate to the challenge for a number of reasons, not least the unconstitutional changes of government which have mushroomed.

Even as the military fight against the terrorist groups falters or only makes partial progress, critical political and economic measures are not advancing with the urgency and robustness required.

Not enough is being done to address entrenched and intensifying grievances of political and economic exclusion on the basis of ethnic and religious identity. The provision of basic services equitably is not keeping pace with demand as government financial resources dwindle in the aftermath of the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic and global economic decline.

Mr. President, Excellencies, we are at an important fork in the road. UN peacekeeping which was started as an innovation is not innovating enough to

address terrorist groups that are threats to international peace and security. The UN's main reason for existence is to maintain international peace and security by assuring the universal respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states. By this standard, terrorist groups in Africa are challenging the UN's fundamental basis. We should not stand aside and accept this.

We urge the Council to learn from, and respond, to the situations in Somalia and Mozambique. Both countries are suffering from the brutal attacks and peace-shattering operations of Al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates. But their successes against the terrorists offer us an example, and perhaps even a template, of how we can achieve lasting victory.

In Somalia, ISIS remains small but is an important link in the global franchise under whose umbrella campaigns in the Great Lakes and Southern Africa are underway. The African Union force ATMIS is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the government and people of Somalia against a destructive Al-Qaeda affiliate. I will not refer to it by name this morning as a sign of our respect for the decision by the government of Somalia and the country's religious leaders to strip the group of its name's association with the youth.

They have asked that the group be named *Khawarij* to reflect that it is a deviant sect exploiting religion for evil and inhuman purposes. This is part of a total war against the terrorists by the people and government of Somalia under the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mahamud.

In Somalia, we are witnessing what can be achieved by a determined government that rallies its forces and the people. In ATMIS and UNSOM, the International Community is standing with the people of Somalia. The European Union and other

partners are making important contributions financially, in military training, and even the kinetic targeting of terrorist leaders. While success has taken a long time to achieve, and the Al Qaeda group is still persistent in its efforts, we can be more confident that if the effort is maintained then the country will be liberated.

In Mozambique, the ISIS-affiliate initially made progress in its campaign of terrorism. However, Mozambican forces with the strong support of Rwanda and forces from the Southern Africa Development Community have retaken ground and are protecting civilians and economic activity.

Mr. President, allow me to draw some conclusions from our observations, and offer recommendations for our collective action.

- a. **First**, we need to stand with governments, like we are doing with Somalia, by mandating and deploying robust African forces assembled by the African Union and regional communities. They need adequate and predictable funding, including through UN-assessed contributions if we are serious about the UN truly protecting international peace and security. Another area of support is to ensure that Security Council mandates are supportive of governments that show strong commitment in fighting international terrorist groups militarily, politically and economically.

As such, it is important that we review the sanctions regime for Somalia to ensure that the government is empowered to use its full sovereign will to defeat the Al Qaeda and ISIS affiliates in its territory. Simultaneously, we must tighten the sanctions that are most clearly targeted at these groups ability to raise and send funds regionally and internationally, to assemble explosives, and to recruit and transport foreign fighters. Their leadership

ranks should also come under stronger sanctions that are automatically deployed on the basis of identification by the multiple Al Qaeda and ISIS monitoring groups in the Security Council. We need to closely listen to the needs of the Somalia government and critical stakeholders as ATMIS transitions to ensure that it is in step with the growing capabilities and success of Somali forces to win, hold and effectively territory. The response in the Sahel, West Africa and the Great Lakes, by the Council and the International Community, should be more alike to that in Somalia and Mozambique.

- b. **Second**, more capacity building for national and regional military actions against these groups is urgently required. This includes financial, training and infrastructural support, focusing on anti- and counter terrorism efforts. We should ensure the full operationalisation of the UNOCT efforts in Africa such as the Regional Office in Nairobi.
- c. **Third**, states in the region must endeavour to undertake ambitious legal and political efforts to be inclusive on the basis of religious, regional and ethnic identity. The state's ability to promote and protect fair and equitable inclusion must be regarded as a core competence. Without it, the state may appear strong in the short-term but will suffer fragilities that are quickly exposed by militarised grievances. Inclusion is a key action to prevent terrorism, insurgency and political instability. The Peacebuilding Commission is an important resource in this arena. It can undertake catalytic initiatives that are then adopted by the government in a more entrenched and far-reaching manner.

- d. **Fourth**, the Security Council must be more committed to dismantling terrorism networks in Africa. The Council must equally apply its counter-terrorism architecture against terrorist groups and their affiliates, particularly those in Africa. This should include appropriate listing of these groups in the 1267 Regime, where they appropriately belong. The fight against global terrorism cannot and will not be won by applying double standards in the face of such a serious threat.

- e. **Fifth**, is a need to build resilient communities by resourcing national disengagement and reintegration capabilities. To this end, there must be coordinated action among the regional countries particularly in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes of armed groups including returning foreign and terrorist fighters.

Mr. President,

Finally, climate shocks constitute a major driver of conflict and instability, and they provide the environment for terrorism to be entrenched. The utmost defence against climate change and its attendant security risks is development that enables adaptation, mitigation, and resilience. This year's COP 27, coincidentally taking place in Africa, should lead to a recommitment by countries to meet their climate commitments and contribute to the development of climate-change affected countries in Africa. This way, we will deny terrorists the breeding ground to thrive.

I thank you