

SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

**THE GROWING THREAT
OF TERRORISM IN AFRICA:
A PRODUCT OF MISDIAGNOSIS
AND FAULTY POLICY RESPONSE ?**

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I INTRODUCTION

On 28 May 2022, the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the supreme decision-making organ of the AU, will hold its 16th extraordinary session. The thematic focus of the extraordinary summit is on terrorism and unconstitutional changes of government. The summit is convened based on the AU Assembly February 2022 decision on the proposal of the Republic of Angola for the convening of 'Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa'.¹

The convening of this extraordinary summit comes amid increasing concern about the troubling rise in terrorist attacks, the ferocity and impact of this surge in attacks and the expansion in the geographic spread of the threat of terrorism in Africa. In his opening address to the February 2022 summit, the AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, decried that 'the continent's security situation today is deeply marked by the metastasis of terrorism'.² Importantly, Mahamat told the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Governments that the 'security situation of the continent now calls for *a real new approach* which should question our peace and security architecture and its correlation with the new destabilizing factors in Africa'.³

Apart from presenting a brief overview of the state of the threat of terrorism in Africa, this special research report supports the call for 'real new approach' by AU Commission Chairperson for a successful response to this threat. The pursuit of such new approach demands the rethinking of the existing dominant characterization of the nature of the threat as being essentially about terrorist groups and the accompanying policy response oriented towards defeating them through the use of security instruments. This report not only makes

a case for a human security-based approach to the diagnosis and policy response to the threat but also demonstrates why this focus on human security constitutes the 'real new approach'. In doing so, the report presents analysis on the state security-centred hitherto dominant approach and its limits on the one hand and why and how a human security approach stands to address these failings of the hard security heavy approach to contain the growing threat to terrorism on the other hand.

II THE CURRENT STATE OF THE THREAT OF TERRORISM

The data from various sources that document and report incidents of terrorist attacks shows at least three key trends in Africa. The first trend is the increasing surge in the incidents of terrorist attacks over the years. The second trend involves the equally troubling rise in fatalities from attacks. From a human security perspective, it is worth noting that much of the burden of the attacks and the fatalities is borne by civilians. The most recent figures show that these two trends are particularly true in the Sahel and the Central Africa regions. The third trend relates to the geographic expansion of the threat of terrorism on the continent. There is no longer a region of the continent free from the activities of groups identified as terrorists. This geographic expansion continues as more and more territories face the risk of becoming theatre of terrorist operations. This section presents data and analysis on these three troubling trends that highlight the current state of the threat of terrorism in Africa.

¹ See AU Doc. Assembly/AU/Dec. 828(XXXV) available on <https://au.int/en/decisions/decisions-declarations-and-resolution-thirty-fifth-ordinary-session-assembly-union>

² Speech of AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat at the opening ceremony of the 35th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, (5 February 2022) <https://au.int/en/node/41442>; also see <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/continental-security-agenda-african-leaders-meet-addis> (emphasis added)

³ Ibid.

2.1. RISING NUMBER OF ATTACKS AND FATALITIES

According to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index published in March 2022,⁴ five of the ten countries most affected by terrorism are from Africa. All except Somalia are from the Sahel/Lake Chad Basin region.⁵ Six of the eight countries in the Sahel are amongst the 10 most impacted countries for terrorism in Africa. Of these, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are the ones experiencing fast growing burden of terrorism in Africa today. According to the index, out of 20 countries most affected by terrorism in the world, eleven are also from Africa. What these figures tell us is that 'Africa faces the unfortunate challenge of having become the epicentre of terrorism and violent extremism.'⁶

While incidents of terrorism affected some 18 countries in all regions of the continent, not all these countries are affected equally. Those that have experienced the most dramatic increase in attacks are in the Sahel region and the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique.⁷ The expansion of the terrorist threat has become particularly persistent in the Sahel. Incidents of terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso increased from 191 in 2020 and to 216 in 2021. Burkina Faso is also the country that experienced the second most deadly attack in the world in 2021. This was from the attack by unidentified terrorist group on a village along the northern border with Niger in June 2021 leading to 160 deaths, including 20 children. Burkina Faso is now considered as having displaced Mali as being the epicentre of the terrorist menace in the Sahel.

The situation in Mali is not any better either. With 333 incidents, the attacks from terrorism in Mali increased by 56 per cent in 2021, when compared

with the previous year. This spike in attacks constitutes the highest number of terrorist attacks and deaths in the last decade in Mali. Although the number of incidents did not increase in Niger, the attacks in the country led to substantial increase in fatalities.

In terms of fatalities, four of the ten countries that account for 85% of deaths from terrorism in the world in 2021 are from Africa.⁸ These four countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Somalia) account for 34% of deaths from terrorism related violence in the world in 2021. Compared to 2020, fatalities from terrorist attacks increased in 2021 in all the three Sahelian countries most affected by terrorism. In Mali, the number of deaths in 2021 was 574 compared to 393 in 2020, in Niger it was 588 compared to 257 in 2020 and in Burkina Faso it was 732 compared to 657 in 2020. The country that witnessed the most increase in the number of deaths is Niger, which is actually the country that experienced the second largest total increase in deaths in the world in 2021. Although the number of attacks in Niger in 2021 remain similar to 2020, the 129 % increase in fatalities is indicative of the fact that the lethality of the attacks has shown a disturbingly dramatic increase.

Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) continues to be the terrorist group to which most attacks are attributed in Burkina Faso. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the group's engagement in political violence — including attacks on both civilians and state forces — increased over 200% in 2021 compared to 2020.⁹ In 2021, the government's inability to stem terrorist attacks and violence provoked popular anger which triggered political instability and high tensions contributing to the coup that took place on 24 January 2022. As with Burkina Faso, JNIM continues to be the group that orchestrates the most terrorist attacks in Mali. It is responsible for 72 terror attacks in 2021, an increase of 80 per cent from the previous year. JNIM's attacks largely target the Malian military and peacekeeping operations, however, the majority of deaths attributed to the

⁴ Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global terrorism index 2022: Measuring the impact of terrorism (March 2022)* available on <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GTI-2022-web.pdf> (Global Terrorism Index 2022)

⁵ These are Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

⁶ See Amani Africa, *Major Peace and Security Issues in Africa in 2022 as the AU marks its 20 years, Special Research Report No. 11 (March 2022)* available on <https://amaniafrica-et.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The-major-peace-and-security-issues-in-Africa-in-the-year-the-AU-marks-its-20-years.pdf>

⁷ According to UN reports, nearly eight hundred thousand people have been displaced in Cabo Delgado since the conflict started in 2017.

⁸ Global Terrorism Index 2022, note 4 above.

⁹ See ACLED, *Ten conflicts to worry about in 2022: The Sahel (March 2022)* available on <https://acleddata.com/10-conflicts-to-worry-about-in-2022/sahel/>

group were civilians. The data from ACLED shows that the 'Greater Sahara faction of the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP-GS) was responsible for more than 560 reported civilian deaths, accounting for nearly 80% of all civilian fatalities in Niger in 2021.'¹⁰

In all the three countries in the Sahel most affected by terrorism, despite the fact that terrorist groups mostly target military and security posts and personnel, those that ended up most affected are civilians. In Niger, civilians accounted for 78% of these casualties, making Niger a country with the third-highest civilian death toll in 2021. Civilians are increasingly bearing the brunt of these attacks in Burkina Faso accounting for 65% of total deaths, a substantial increase from 32% the previous year. In comparison to the previous year, civilian deaths from terrorism also increased in Mali by 46% in 2021.

While overall number of attacks decreased in Mozambique, Nigeria, and even Somalia, the frequency, the gravity of the threat from terrorist groups remains concerning. The success registered in Nigeria and most notably in Mozambique in inflicting major military blows against terrorist groups has as yet to be adequately anchored on political and socio-economic strategies and plans. Indeed, the various attacks that Al Shabaab has successfully orchestrated during 2021 in Somalia clearly attest how fragile progress registered in the military sphere can be when not adequately supported by political cohesion. It is on this account that the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) expressed its concern over the infighting in the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), between the President and the Prime Minister, on the one hand, and between the FGS and the Federal Member States (FMS) on the other, among others, due to the opportunity this affords Al Shabaab to exploit political differences to its advantage.¹¹

Additionally, events in 2021 also revealed the continuing change in the means and methods as well as sophistication of the modus operandi of terrorist groups. Apart from the exploitation of existing grievances and use of natural resources

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ AU Peace and Security Council, communiqué of 1053rd session of the Council, (7 December 2021) AU Doc. PSC/PR/COMM.1053(2021) para 12.

and organized criminal activities for financing themselves, some of the terrorist groups have started the use of drone technology for reconnaissance purposes and such weapons as surface-to-air missiles.

2.2 THE GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF THREAT OF TERRORISM

A reference to the 2010 report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission to the PSC reveals that the active operation of terrorist groups was confined to pockets of only a couple of regions.¹² The report pointed out at the time that '[p]redominantly, the terrorist threat in Africa has been shaped by activities in two regions and led by two terrorist organizations, both affiliated to Al Qaeda, namely Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), in North and West Africa, and Al-Shabaab in East Africa.'¹³ Boko Haram, while active in northeast Nigeria, was far from its later day infamy as the most lethal terrorist group in Africa.

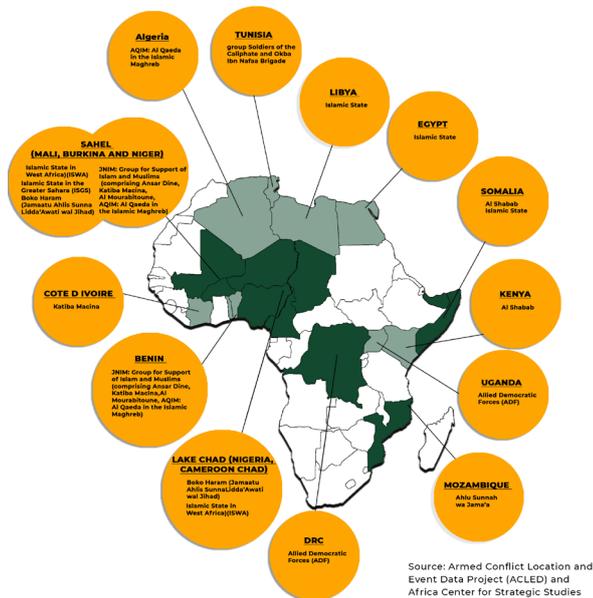


Over the past seven years, the geography of terrorism in Africa has completely changed (see the map below). The threat of terrorism has not only engulfed the Sahel, a region currently most affected by this menace as highlighted above, but also reared its ugly head across the continent. Before the Sahel, with the spread of Boko Haram beyond Nigeria along with the ferocity of its attacks, the Lake Chad Basin region eclipsed the two regions identified in the 2010 report of the AU. A decade after the 2010 report, apart from entrenching itself in the regions where it was

¹² Report of the AU Commission Chairperson to measures to strengthen cooperation in the prevention and combating of terrorism, submitted to the 249th session of the Peace and Security Council (22 November 2010).

¹³ Ibid, para. 7.

prominent, the threat has since then registered increasingly worrying geographic expansion. And today it has established its foothold in all the five regions of the continent. Indications are that there is real risk of the threat further expanding into the littoral countries of West Africa and parts of the Great Lakes and East Africa.¹⁴



While violent terrorist events in the Lake Chad have reduced in 2021 compared to the previous year, Boko Haram remains a lethal terrorist group in the region causing the death of about five people on average per single attack. The year 2021 witnessed about 134 attacks on military forces including ambushes, direct attack and Improvised Explosives Device (IED) incidents, while a little more than 150 attacks were carried out on civilian targets. A concerning development in relation to the operation of Boko Haram which has been highlighted in various sessions of the PSC is the increasing use of technologies such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by the terrorist group.¹⁵

Another part of the continent that experienced major incidents of terrorist violence is the Central Africa and Great Lakes regions, affecting most notably (apart from Cameroon and Chad) the volatile eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. Indeed, the DRC registered the most notable rise in attacks attributed to groups

identified in recent years as terrorist groups with some form of affiliation with the global terrorist group, Islamic State (IS). In the first half of 2021 alone, terrorist attacks led to the death of more than 1500 individuals, almost half of the total death registered on the continent. Between October and November, Uganda recorded several bomb attacks, including suicide bombers.¹⁶ The attacks were reportedly carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan rebel outfit operating from neighbouring DRC and affiliated with IS. This has now become the major terrorist threat in the region that reportedly maintains working relations with terror group in northern Mozambique.

In East Africa, Al-Shabaab, despite the loss it sustained over the years, continues to adapt and maintain a level of organization and capability to recruit, orchestrate attacks (in Somalia and sporadically in Kenya) and maintain control of large parts of rural areas in Southern Somalia. Admittedly, this continuing threat of Al Shabaab is more a manifestation of the weaknesses of the government of Somalia than the group's strength. As in the past in 2021, Al Shabaab took advantage of the political tension and infighting between the President on the one hand and the Prime Minister and opposition politicians on the other hand and between the FGS and the FMS.

Terrorist attacks have relatively reduced in other parts of the continent. After the troubling expansion of attacks in the province of Cabo Delgado of northern Mozambique, there was about 59% decrease in the number of attacks against civilians by insurgent groups as compared to 2020. However, the region remains volatile and the fighting has continued in the province as well as westward in the province of Niassa. The UN reported that attacks carried out between January and mid-March displaced some 24,000 people within the Nangade district and some 5,000 have also sought protection in the neighbouring district of Mueda.¹⁷

¹⁴ Amani Africa, Special Research Report No. 11, 6.

¹⁵ PSC, at its 816th and 973rd sessions, expressed its concern over the use of UAVs by Boko Haram in some of its operations, particularly for reconnaissance purpose.

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, *The Kampala Attacks and Their Regional Implications* (19 November 2021) available on <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/great-lakes/uganda/kampala-attacks-and-their-regional-implications>

¹⁷ See UN News: *Mozambique: Thousands continue to flee violence in Cabo Delgado* (22 March 2022) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114412>

In terms of further expansion of the threat, there are growing concerns in West Africa on the imminent risk of expansion of terrorist activities into the littoral countries of the region. In previous years, incidents of terrorist attacks have been reported in Cote d'Ivoire. The most recent such attack attributed to Katiba Macina, affiliated to the terrorist group JNIM led to the death of ten soldiers near the border with Burkina Faso. In November 2021, Togo reported terrorist attacks in the northern region, near its border with Burkina Faso. The incident involved the attack of a security post. The most recent attack claimed the life of eight soldiers in the locality of Kpékpakandi, in north of Togo. Similarly, while two soldiers were reportedly killed in Benin in militant attacks in December, Benin experienced its deadliest attack in February 2022 involving IEDs that claimed the lives of nine people in a park on the border with Burkina Faso and Niger.

III EXPLAINING WORRYING RISE AND SPREAD OF THE TERRORISM THREAT IN AFRICA: MISDIAGNOSIS AND FAULTY POLICY APPROACHES?

It emerges from the foregoing that despite its relatively successful counter terrorism operation in Somalia through the instrumentality of the AMISOM¹⁸ and that of the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) in the central Africa region,¹⁹ the rise and expansion of terrorism in various parts of the continent highlights the limits of and the challenge it poses both to the AU's peace and security architecture, as AUC Chairperson noted, and its peace and security partnerships. The growth of the threat of terrorism

¹⁸ See Solomon A. Dersso, *Somalia dilemmas: Changing security dynamics, but limited policy choices*, ISS Paper 218 (October 2010) and for a more in-depth and most recent analysis see Paul D Williams, *Fighting for peace in Somalia: A history and analysis of the African Union Mission (2007-2017)* (2018).

¹⁹ On the gains registered through the RCI-LRA, see Amani Africa, *Briefing on the RCI-LRA, Insights on the PSC* (19 September 2018) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/psc-briefing-on-the-rci-lra/>

from strength to strength over the years despite the increase in state security-based responses is the clearest statement on the failure of the hard security first policy approach. Given this failure, changing both the characterization of the threat of terrorism as just a state security problem and the policy tools used in response to it based on such misdiagnosis has become imperative. For this, it is thus worth revisiting the factors that made the emergence and the current expansion of this threat. It is possible to identify at least eight such factors.

The first issue has to do with the characterization of what the main nature of the problem. The dominant view until recently, which remains to be the governing view reflected in the outcome of AU policy documents, treats the crises or conflicts involving terrorist groups as being essentially a terrorism problem. This view that reduces the challenge of terrorism in Africa into just a hard security matter is considered relation to the Sahel as being premised on 'the incorrect assumption that terrorist groups are the root of instability in the Sahel.'²⁰ One manifestation of this is the 'French understandings of jihadist groups as primarily terrorists rather than sociologically complex insurgencies have placed ideological blinders on a deeper grasp of regional conflicts.'²¹ This reductionism and misdiagnosis led to a policy approach that is skewed in favour of relying predominantly on a security heavy approach. Thus, much of the resources and policy attention is directed to the use of such instruments including counter terrorism military operations or missions, security partnerships, intelligence and cross border security cooperation, the boosting of national law enforcement laws and institutions, and the establishment of continental security heavy structures and response mechanisms.

This feature of the policy approach to terrorism in Africa is characteristic of the dominant policy thinking and response in the AU as well. Analysis

²⁰ Marielle Harris, Catrina Doxsee, and Jared Thompson, *The End of Operation Barkhane and the Future of Counterterrorism in Mali* (2 March 2022) available on <https://www.wcsis.org/analysis/end-operation-barkhane-and-future-counterterrorism-mali>

²¹ Nathaniel Powel, *Why France Failed in Mali, War on the Rocks* (21 February 2022) available on <https://warontherocks.com/2022/02/why-france-failed-in-mali/>

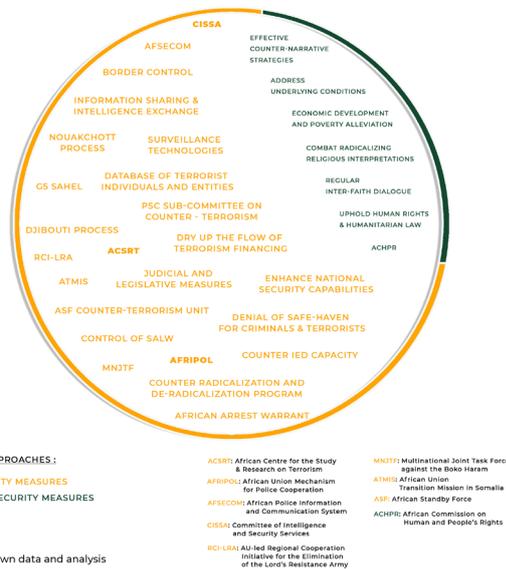
of the policy decisions of the AU both at the level of the AU Assembly and that of the PSC show that the policy pronouncements and the response tools have increasingly become steeped in the dominant policy thinking premised on the priority of hard security. For example, and as shown in the table below, between 2010 and 2022, some nine security response instruments have been authorized by the AU.

AU Counterterrorism Mechanisms		
Mechanism	Status of Operation	Relevant AU Policy Organ Decisions
G-5 Sahel Joint Force	Active since 2017	PSC/PR/COMM(DCLXXIX) (Communiqué of PSC's 679th Session) endorsed the draft CONOPs and authorised the deployment of the Joint Force
Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA)	Active since 2011	PSC/PR/Comm(LXIX) (Communiqué of PSC's 69th Session) authorised the deployment of AMISOM for an initial period of 6 months. Until its transition into ATMIS in April 2022, AMISOM's mandate was renewed periodically by the PSC.
AMISOM	Active from March 2007 to April 2022	PSC/PR/Comm(LXIX) (Communiqué of PSC's 69th Session) authorised the deployment of AMISOM for an initial period of 6 months. Until its transition into ATMIS in April 2022, AMISOM's mandate was renewed periodically by the PSC.
Djibouti Processes	Active since 2015	First Meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services (HISS) of the member countries of the Djibouti Process.
Nouakchott Process	Active since 2013	Nouakchott Declaration (First Summit of countries participating in the Nouakchott Process).

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram	Active since 2015	PSC/AHG/2(CDLXXXIV) (Communiqué of PSC's 484th Session) authorised the deployment of MNJTF and the AU Assembly also endorsed the establishment of the task force in Assembly/AU/Dec.558(XXIV).
African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)	Active as of April 2022	PSC/PR/COMM.1068(2022) (Communiqué of PSC's 1068th Session) decided to authorise ATMIS as a replacement of AMISOM.
Southern Africa Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)	Active since July 2021	PSC/PR/COMM.2/1062 (2022) (Communiqué of PSC's 1062nd Session) endorses the deployment of SAMIM. The force was deployed in line with the approval by Extraordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Maputo, Republic of Mozambique on 23 June 2021. The Extraordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government held in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 12 January 2022 has extended SAMIM's mandate for additional three months and PSC has endorsed this extension as well in its 1062nd Communiqué.
Deployment of 3000	Not yet active	Assembly/AU/Dec.792(XXXIII)/33rd Ordinary Session of AU Assembly - decision to deploy 3000 troops to Sahel for a period of six months. In addition, PSC/PR/COMM.(CML) (2020) (Communiqué of PSC's 950th Session) endorsed the 'Revised Strategic Concept Note on Planning Guidance for the deployment of an additional 3000 troops to the Sahel'.

Table 1: AU Counterterrorism Mechanisms
(Source: own data and analysis)

In terms of the engagement of AU structures as well, increasingly AU policy decisions (as can be gleaned from PSC outcome documents depicted in the diagram below) tend to focus on hard security mechanisms. From the AU structures, for example, the African Centre on the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) and the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) as well as the PSC Sub-committee on Terrorism are the ones most commonly referenced in almost all PSC decisions relating to the threat of terrorism in Africa.²² These are also the structures that have become engaged most actively in shaping AU policy thinking and responses.



One of the troubling effects of this near exclusive reliance on such hard security tools is that it has crowded out other policy measures that target the drivers and causes of the problem rather than just the symptom of the problem. As one commentator rightly observed with respect to the Sahel, 'While Sahelian governments and their Western partners assert that CT [counterterrorism] is only part of a comprehensive strategy, the prominence of CT operations—measured in both financial and logistical support, as well as rhetoric—overshadows efforts to support democratization and robust governance in the region.'²³ The hard security first policy approach, even when acknowledging

underlying causes and drivers, remains inattentive to the human security dimension of the crises. It is further aggravating the underlying conditions and drivers of insecurity by diverting very scarce human, technical and financial resources towards combatting terrorist groups at the expense of and away from more pressing social and economic problems on the continent.

There is thus a clear need for rethinking the focus on military/police/intelligence/criminal justice forms of security enhancement. Without such a rethink that anchors security measures on comprehensive human-centric political-development strategy and designs and deploys them in pursuit of and subordinated to such strategy that resuscitate the delivery capacity and local legitimacy of the state, particularly in territories where this is missing, the use of hard security measures alone would only have partial and precarious success.²⁴

The second has to do with the fact that terrorist groups were able to exploit the political, social, economic and other governance challenges facing local communities, which constitute the root of problem but not considered as such and hence did not receive the level of policy attention they deserve. More often than not these terrorist groups tap into and draw on the increasing socio-economic pressures facing peripheral communities including competition over resources ever increasingly depleting due to climatic pressure, the absence or poor/inadequate presence of both public services and the state in these communities and lack of their representation in governance. Illustrating this from the experience of the Lake Chad Basin region, Modesta Tochukwu Alozie and Chika Charles Aniekewe observed that '[t]here has been serious governance failures over many years, manifesting as acute underinvestment in social services. Most people in the Lake Chad Basin do not have access to schools and hospitals. This neglect and marginalisation has generated a sense of despair that the Boko Haram movement was able to utilise to its advantage.'²⁵

²² For the list of PSC outcome documents on this theme see annex iii.

²³ Judd Devermont and Marielle Harris, *Rethinking Crisis Responses in the Sahel*, CSIS BRIEFS (22 December 2020) available on <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rethinking-crisis-responses-sahel>

²⁴ Dersso, *Somalia dilemmas*, note 16 above.

²⁵ Modesta Tochukwu Alozie and Chika Charles Aniekewe, *Fixing the Lake Chad crisis from the bottom-up*, ACCORD Conflict and Resilience Monitor (13 April 2022) available on <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/fixing-the-lake-chad-crisis-from-the-bottom-up/>

Third and related to the above the growing gap and in some instances the complete breakdown in the relationship between state and society have opened enormous political and security vacuum. With bad governance and failure to deliver services denting already fragile or declining legitimacy of governments, this is the vacuum that unlawful forces take advantage of for propagating radical extremism and for recruiting disgruntled groups into their ranks. Further aggravating this condition is the heavy-handedness and the indiscriminate nature of the reaction of security forces leading to civilian casualties, thereby entrenching existing grievances and trust deficit. In this context, there is also the susceptibility of members of marginalized communities, particularly the unemployed and disillusioned youth for radicalization and recruitment into the ranks of these groups.

Fourth, the dominant approach to terrorism has also narrowed down options available in the peace and security toolbox in responding to terrorism, most notably by excluding the use of negotiation, dialogue and reconciliation with groups identified as terrorist. As one report pointed out, '[d]uring the negotiations for, and the implementation of, the Algiers Accord, the Malian state and many of its external partners strictly forbade engagement with internationally-designated Islamist terrorists.'²⁶ While there is change in the position of Malian authorities, it is greeted with strong opposition from France. French President Emmanuel Macron stated that 'We cannot carry out joint operations with powers that decided to negotiate with groups that, at the same time, shoot at our children. No dialogue and no compromise.'²⁷ Such marginalization of these well-established peacemaking instruments has the unintended consequence of displacing the primacy of politics with the primacy of the instruments of violence for achieving stabilization and security. This further reinforces the tendency to reduce the threat of terrorism in Africa into just being about terrorist groups which are only the symptoms rather than

the main problem. Importantly, the criminalization of engagement with such groups also closes an important avenue for such groups and their members for opting out of continuing in militant insurgency. As Alex de Waal pointed out, 'it is hard to identify any insurgent group that controlled territory, practiced terrorism...and has been defeated by the imposition of the state authority, with or without international coercion, to the exclusion of any political negotiation.'²⁸

Fifth is the lack of a cohesive and effective political leadership in affected countries. The experience in the persistence and expansion of terrorist activities in various regions of the continent shows that the manipulation of militant groups for political ends and/or the disregard by central authorities of early warnings on the threat of emerging insurgent activities or provision of ineffective leadership allow such groups to grow and expand their capabilities. Speaking on how this lack of leadership facilitates the insurgency in Somalia, former Prime Minister of Somalia argued in 2010 that 'if governments are weak or fail and leave a leadership vacuum, it will be filled by those with the energy and the desire to take over ...In cases where a government concedes power to radical extremist groups...a rot sets in that can be hard to remove.'²⁹ The result of this along with the failure or refusal of governments to acknowledge the grievances of people in marginalized regions has been a failure of governments in those countries to initiate appropriate and timely responses when signs of activities of insurgent groups were detected. This lack of responsible leadership manifests in the lack of political attention given to risk assessment works and the corresponding responsibility of initiating, in consultation with affected communities and concerned stakeholders, risk mitigation plans and implementation of appropriate political, socio-economic, and rule of law measures. In the absence of the necessary political disposition, institutional preparedness and policy agility, countries are unable to contain the threats of terrorism and violent extremism that thrives on local grievances and governance induced conflict dynamics.

²⁶ Devermont & Harris, *Rethinking Crisis Responses in the Sahel*, note 21 above.

²⁷ France 24, *With French troops poised to withdraw, Mali will have free reign to negotiate with jihadists*, (16 February 2022) available on <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20220216-with-french-troops-poised-to-withdraw-mali-could-revive-negotiations-with-jihadists>

²⁸ Alex de Waal, *Inclusion in peace-making: From moral claim to political fact*, in Pamela Aall and Chester A. Crocker (eds.) *The Fabric of peace in Africa: Looking beyond the state* (2017) 165-181, 169.

²⁹ Quoted in Dersso, *Somalia dilemmas*, note 16 above, 1.

Sixth and related to the above is also the issue of 'supply heaviness' of partner engagement and support in counter terrorism in Africa.³⁰ This supply heaviness of the engagement of partners in counter terrorism applies both to how the problem is diagnosed on the one hand and the orientation of the policy response on the other hand. As the experience in the Sahel with large number of security programs and mechanisms shows,³¹ more often than not these programmes are donor driven, focus primarily on military- and police-security capacity-building targeting potential threats to, and addressing the strategic interests of the donor partners, as one UN document pointed out as far back as 2010.³² 'There is less fervour', the document pointed out, 'in addressing fundamental development and related issues of African countries which has caused some scepticism on the continent with regards the true objectives of bilateral partners.'³³ It is thus true that while they contribute to enhancing capacity of the targeted elements of the security institutions, military/police/law enforcement focused support programmes do not address or ameliorate the conditions that make the emergence, growth and prolonged activeness of insurgent groups such as Al Shabaab.

Seventh, there is also the capacity gaps afflicting security institutions. Ordinarily, these security forces are organized for engaging in conventional warfare, for which many are also not adequately equipped and prepared. In the context of these deficiencies afflicting security forces in many fragile countries, facing the asymmetric warfare that terrorist groups wage has become a near impossible task. There is also a mismatch between the foot print and capacity of forces and the

³⁰ Crisis Group noted in one of its reports that 'the current prioritization of military action' is 'often driven by...international partners.' See *The Niger-Mali Border: Subordinating military action to a political strategy*, Africa Report No. 261 (12 June 2018).

³¹ These include 1) the French military mission Operation Barkhane, 2) the Sahelian regional G5 Sahel Joint Force, 3) European Union training missions in Niger and Mali (EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali), focused on law enforcement, and in Mali (EUTM), dedicated to the national army, 4) the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), 5) the French-led EU force Takuba Task Force and 6) the proposed AU 3000 force.

³² United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, *Africa and international counterterrorism imperatives (2010)*.

³³ *Ibid*, 28.

growing size of territories affected by insecurity. For example, in the Sahel, the large area covered by the tri-border region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger compared with the relatively small numbers of Malian military personnel and counter-terrorism forces means that resources are too stretched to be effective in the area. These institutional fragilities and the lack of preparedness and capacity are further compounded by corruption and the instrumentalization of counter-terrorism operation for economic and political gains.

Eighth, the rise in terrorism is also linked to the ease of access to arms and weapons as well as opportunities for insurgent groups for financing themselves. This has been made possible not only by the growth in trafficking in weapons, and the exploitation by terrorist actors of state weaknesses and poorly governed spaces for engaging in war economic activities (extortion, plundering of natural resources, organized criminal enterprises) that enable them to finance themselves. But it is also made possible by the increasing need on the part of various sectors of society to rely on the possession and use of arms and weapons for both safeguarding their security and promoting their interests.

IV RETHINKING THE DIAGNOSIS OF AND RESPONSE TO THE TERRORISM THREAT IN AFRICA: OUTLINE FOR A NEW HUMAN SECURITY-BASED AU POLICY APPROACH

The upshot of the foregoing is that the terrorism menace facing Africa is primarily a product of the interrelated issues of the governance-development deficits and the weakness of the state. Terrorist groups and the threat they pose, while present an immediate security problem, are only symptoms of these deeper issues. Policy responses that start and end with dealing with terrorist groups and the immediate security threat

they present are no more than desperate efforts at managing the symptoms. When they are done without adequate preparedness and as part of and in pursuit of a political-development strategy, they tend to further inflame the fire of terrorism. In the light of the worrying trend and the foregoing analysis, this rethinking of the diagnoses makes the imperative for change in policy approach to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa patently evident and urgent.

The starting point for this is to foreground, and premise policy formulation on, the recognition of the primacy of local issues and dynamics as the main targets of policy intervention. The importance of this lies in the fact that it allows policy intervention to focus on the vulnerabilities and fragilities as well as political and socio-economic governance pathologies that create the conditions both for the emergence and importantly for the resilience of terrorist groups. Unlike the prevailing security heavy approach to the threat of terrorism which tends to stigmatize affected communities, this new approach would also help in focusing on addressing their marginalization and other grievances and on facilitating their empowerment. Emphasis is thus put on a new policy mindset committed to the full inclusion of peripheral communities and territories as agents of peace and stability in the policy and political imagination of national decision-making processes.

Of equal significance is the shift this new approach entails in the characterization of militant jihadi groups from being primarily terrorists to being sociologically complex insurgencies. There is growing body of analysis that supports this critical shift.³⁴ This is therefore an approach that helps to avoid the faulty globally dominant perspective

³⁴ See Larry Attree & Jordan Street, *No shortcuts to security: Learning from responses to armed conflicts involving proscribed groups*, Saferworld (May 2022) (Saferworld); Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, *Rethinking the response to jihadist groups across the Sahel*, Chatham House, (March 2021) available on <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/2021-03-02-response-jihadist-groups-sahel-perouse-de-montclos.pdf> (Chatham House); Crisis Group, *A course correction for the Sahel stabilization strategy*, Africa Report No. 299 (February 2021); Judd Devermont and Marielle Harris, *Rethinking Crisis Responses in the Sahel*, CSIS BRIEFS (22 December 2020) available on <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rethinking-crisis-responses-sahel>; Jide Okeke, *Blend stabilisation? Experience from Lake Chad Basin region*, Conflict and Resilience Monitor, ACCORD (25 November 2020) available on <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/blended-stabilisation-experiences-from-the-lake-chad-basin-region/>

that frames the problem of terrorism 'as an overwhelming threat, driven by evil, unreasoning ideologies,'³⁵ and hence as the central focus of policy interventions aimed at defeating terrorist groups by force. As one recent analysis pointed out in relation to the Sahel for example 'Rather than the ideology of global jihad, the driving force behind the emergence and resilience of non-state armed groups in the Sahel is a combination of weak states, corruption and the brutal repression of dissent, embodied in dysfunctional military forces.'³⁶

The other aspect of this new policy approach is the shift in the focus of the target of policy interventions. Rather than the prevailing fixation with terrorist groups, which are themselves sociologically complex insurgencies, it brings to the centre of policy analysis and intervention affected communities and the resolution of their grievances and the conflict dynamics of which terrorist groups are a part. It rightly separates the causes of insecurity and the wider drivers of conflict in affected territories (as the governance-development and state weakness issues) from the symptoms of insecurity and conflict (terrorist groups). In other words, this calls for the recognition of the problem more as local and national conflict driven by development and governance failures than as terrorism.

Such policy reorientation on the nature of the main problem demands a socio-economic and political program that focuses on promoting respect for human rights, and the (re)building of legitimate local governance structures and capacities that incrementally deliver public services and social and economic provisions and facilitate the delivery of required humanitarian and other assistance and support as well as rehabilitation programs supported by regional security cooperation. This is not a completely new policy approach in Africa. One example of such policy shift on the fight against terrorism that exemplifies this reorientation is the Regional Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region.³⁷ The strategy comprises

³⁵ Saferworld, above.

³⁶ Chatham House, note 39 above.

³⁷ See the strategy here <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/>

nine pillars: political cooperation; security and human rights; disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reinsertion and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram; humanitarian assistance; governance and the social contract; socio-economic recovery and environmental sustainability; education, learning and skills; prevention of violent extremism and building peace; and empowerment and inclusion of women and youth. While this strategy does not eschew the role of security tools, it also puts the limelight on and reorients much of the intensive political, diplomatic efforts and policy thinking towards the governance, development, environmental and humanitarian dimensions of conflict and insecurity in the region.

In terms of allocation of resources, this paradigm shift in the approach to the policy response to terrorism in Africa also necessitates that the same, if not more, level of infusion of technical assistance, financial resources and training of civilian expertise is directed to the governance, the economic and social issues facing communities in affected territories as the security-related sectors. Accordingly, programming of counter-terrorism interventions should thus be reconfigured in a way that avails resources and capacity building support geared towards building local capacities and governance structures for delivery of public services and empowerment of local communities and marginalized members of such communities as well as mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes among local communities while promoting their inclusion in national decision-making processes. Such reconfiguration of counter-terrorism programming has a higher chance of creating the social conditions that deprive jihadi groups of the grounds that make it easy for them to extract support from local communities.

Flowing from the above is the need for paying adequate attention to the demographic issues of affected territories in the rolling out of legitimate local governance structures and in the delivery

regional-stabilisation-recovery-and-resilience-strategy-rss-pdf, and a brief analysis by Jide Okeke, *Blend stabilisation? Experience from Lake Chad Basin region*, *Conflict and Resilience Monitor*. ACCORD (25 November 2020) available on <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/blended-stabilisation-experiences-from-the-lake-chad-basin-region/>

of social services such as health, education, administration of justice and local policy initiatives that promote peaceful resolution of disputes among local communities. While attention should be given to the importance that communities attach to the role of religious leaders and community elders, of more pressing interest is the establishment of conditions that both offer hope for young people, who in the absence of better options, are lured into joining extremist groups and affords recognition and space for active participation of women.

The other element that cannot be emphasized enough for the success of this recalibrated policy approach is the critical importance of nurturing and supporting courageous leadership that has the political will, dexterity and imagination for acknowledging the existence of fragilities and the absence or fragility of state institutions in parts of the state and complex challenges facing politically and geographically peripheral territories in those parts. This is critical not only for national authorities to assume their responsibility and play active role for ensuring the primacy of a political strategy as a basis for the use of security tools. But it is also a pre-requisite, as experiences both globally and on the continent show, for establishing successful counter-terrorism partnerships that make adequate provisions for non-security measures to deal comprehensively with the governance, economic, social and humanitarian needs of people in affected territories. No amount of external intervention, whether continental or international, will have a chance to bring about resolution of the threat of terrorism without such leadership of national actors. In the absence of national authorities being willing and able to assume such responsible leadership role, the most any such external intervention can achieve, when it registers tactical successes against groups identified as terrorist, is in managing the situation.

Related to the above is the shift this new policy approach necessitates in terms of peace and security partnerships in countering terrorism from being supply-side heavy to being demand driven. This requires that the interventions of partners are designed **primarily** in response to the voices and

needs of national stakeholders, particularly people in marginalized regions that are vulnerable to and facing the operation of insurgencies. This also entails an approach on the part of partners that creates conditions for assumption of responsibilities by national actors and does not impede the pursuit of the settlement of the conflict through political process.

Given the experience of various countries affected by terrorism, the other aspect of this new policy approach is the emphasis it puts on building institutional culture and capacity for **expert based and human-centric** risk assessment and early warning processes that have the level of societal and political influence to command and induce politically, socio-economically grounded and locally legitimate early action and risk mitigation measures. What distinguishes such risk assessment and early warning from security and military intelligence is it expands the gaze of analysis beyond state security issues and recognizes and puts premium on the underlying human security issues which require governance reform, development and humanitarian intervention responses. This helps national governments in avoiding the predisposition of security and military intelligence to reduce the diagnosis into being a hard security problem (involving the detection of insurgency and/or crime) and to propose as policy response law enforcement and hard security measures that further alienate affected communities. As such, it makes the formulation of balanced multidimensional responses to the risks and threats identified through such risk assessment and early warnings.

Within the framework of the AU and regional processes, going beyond the current emphasis on ACSRT, CISSA and AFRIPOL, this new approach demands tapping into and bringing to the centre of the policy process relating to the terrorism threat in Africa the resources from the African Governance Architecture instruments, institutions and processes and the social affairs and development bodies of the AU as well. Apart from the reference commonly made in PSC policy documents to the role of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), there is a need for

activating this role of the ACHPR including in briefing the PSC (just like those of CISSA, ACSRT and AFRIPOL) when the PSC deals with the thematic issue of terrorism and countries or regions affected by the threat of terrorism. This new policy approach demands that the AU Assembly and the PSC also tap into and create space for the mobilization of the use of such other processes as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) national review process, the Continental Conflict Prevention Framework (CCPF) and the accompanying Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS).

This new policy approach does not dispense with the need for and importance of security instruments. It however puts primacy on the building of the legitimacy, professionalism and the institutional and resource capacity of national security institutions. As such policy interventions, including continental and international support instruments, have to be designed and geared towards facilitating the building of not just the fighting capacity of national forces but also importantly their legitimacy and professionalism, including not only in terms of strict adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law standards and protection of civilians but also their skills and mindsets in assisting local communities in finding ways and means of addressing the issues facing them. Such approach needs to target not just those countries currently facing active operation terrorist groups on their territory. As we have pointed out in an earlier report, it is becoming ever more evident that there is a need not only for enhancing the capacities and local legitimacy of national security institutions of the countries currently affected by terrorist violence including Mali, Burkina Faso and Mozambique and those facing the risks of expanding terrorist violence such as Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.³⁸

The other element of this new policy approach, in terms of its conflict settlement and peacebuilding dimensions, is its recognition, and advocacy for active use of, the peacemaking instruments of negotiation and dialogue with members of

terrorist groups as part of the peace and security tools available in conflict situations involving the presence of terrorist groups with strong local base. Given that the threat of terrorism in most part is primarily an outgrowth of governance and underdevelopment induced local conflict dynamics, the recognition of negotiation as part of the peace and security instruments necessary for conflict resolution in situations involving terrorist groups has the advantage of preventing current policy options from condemning affected societies to perpetual conflict. There is already indication in the AU on the need for keeping the tool of negotiation on the table. Speaking in October 2020 in the context of the AU theme of Silencing the Guns, then AU Peace and Security Commissioner Smail Chergui expressed the view that negotiations between the U.S. government and the Taliban could spur Sahelian states to explore dialogue with groups identified as terrorist and the AU has left 'the door of dialogue open to Malians willing to negotiate,' but only on the basis of a clear commitment to respect of Mali's unity, territorial integrity and rejection of links to terrorist and criminal groups.¹³⁹

The political, socio-economic and security dimensions need to also be accompanied by the humanitarian component. In terms of addressing the immediate challenges of people in affected territories, the delivery of humanitarian relief and assistance is an important component of human-centric approach to dealing with the threats of insecurity. This also offers affected communities some respite. Such provision, apart from meeting the human needs of those communities and ameliorating the humanitarian crisis facing them, can serve as a catalyst for stabilization.

Finally, as in the current approach, the new approach also supports efforts directed towards containing the illicit trading and circulation of small arms and light weapons. However, emphasis is put not only in dealing with the supply dimension of the problem of small arms and light weapons but also and importantly by addressing the demand side of the problem. Attention is drawn to the importance

of enhancing the safe keeping of stockpiles of both national security institutions and peace support operations and the provision of support for the effective implementation of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) components of peace agreements. In terms of addressing the demand side of the problem, two critical measures are particularly significant. The first is the necessity of addressing the gaps in the delivery by the state of the effective administration of justice and the provision of security across the breadth and depth of its territory. The second is leveraging the role of civil society and community groups in investing in and supporting the enhancement of locally legitimate mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes and their use by communities 'so that members of the public do not feel the need to resort to acquiring and using arms for defending themselves.'¹⁴⁰

V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The threat of terrorism continues to grow on the continent. Over the past few years, the number of terrorist attacks and the fatalities from such attacks has increased dramatically. Geographically as well, the menace of the terrorist threat now affects all the five regions of the continent, albeit unevenly. There are credible signs that the operation of terrorist groups in the Sahel is expanding with risks of it gaining foothold in the littoral states of West Africa.

This growing expansion of the threat is despite the proliferation of various security response measures and the pouring of increasing amount of diplomatic, financial and military resources. As this policy brief established and the work by others have attested, this failure of the counter-terrorism interventions of the AU, regional entities and international actors is attributable to two inter-related factors. The first factor is the misdiagnosis of the nature of the threat and the resultant reduction of the problem as being essentially about

39 Cited in Devermont & Harris, *Rethinking Crisis Responses in the Sahel*, note 21 above.

40 Amani Africa, *Africa Amnesty Month, Insights on the PSC* (3 September 2020) <https://amaniafrica-et.org/insights-on-the-peace-security-council-2/>

terrorist groups. The second is the policy response that flows from the misdiagnosis of the problem. This entails the orientation and primary focus of the policy response to defeating those identified as terrorists and the resultant primacy accorded to the use of hard security instruments.

After a critical review of the various facets of the characterization of the problem and the accompanying state security-centred policy response of dominant thus far, the policy brief called for a human-security-centred new approach to dealing with this threat in Africa. While this approach still affirms the importance of hard security instruments, it however puts premium on its utilization as part and in support of a political-developmental strategy. It thus calls for a shift from a security first approach to an approach that is premised on the primacy of human-security-centred political strategy. Below is a tabular representation of the existing approach and the new approach proposed in this special research report.

	The existing state security centric approach	New human security Centered approach
Core of the problem	Terrorist groups	Deficits in governance and development and state-society relationship
Resource allocation	Directed dominantly to security sectors and security instruments	Governance and development sectors
Policy instruments	Military/police/intelligence/criminal justice focused instruments	Political strategy, development and governance
Partnership	Supply-side heavy	Demand oriented
Risk assessment and early warning	Military and security intelligence focused	Expert and human security based
Target of policy instruments	Elimination of terrorist groups	Resolving the governance and development problems of people in affected territories
AU instruments and mechanisms	ACSRT, AFRIPOL, CISSA, ASF Specialized Unit on counterterrorism, PSC sub-committee on terrorism	African Governance Architecture (AGA), ACHPR, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), APRM, CCPF

	The existing state security centric approach	New human security Centered approach
Use of negotiation as instrument of conflict settlement	Not considered part of the peace and security tool for conflicts involving groups considered terrorists	Considered unavoidable and necessary for achieving settlement

Table 2: Distinction between state security centred and human security centred approaches (Source: own data and analysis)

The elements of this new approach can be organized around the following four areas:

Focus on establishing legitimate governance

The point of departure for the role of the AU working in concert with RECs and partners is facilitating and supporting a recognition on the part of national authorities of the deficiencies in the governance conditions of peoples in territories experiencing insecurity and conflict. This recognition opens avenues for understanding the grievances and concerns of affected communities and enables the willingness of national authorities to engage and initiate dialogue with affected communities horizontally for resolving inter-communal and local tensions and vertically for patching up fractured relationship between the state and the affected communities. National authorities are best supported to show their will for political engagement through initiating and establishing positive contacts with local interlocutors to jointly explore and develop platforms for giving a hearing for the communities. It is critical that the dialogue is all inclusive and facilitates the development of consensual political roadmap for identifying, designing and implementing various measures that facilitate trust between the state and local communities and peaceful coexistence among local communities.

Beyond helping in building relationship of trust and bringing affected communities to the process of decision-making, it is critical that the dialogue,

consultation and reconciliation processes additionally facilitates consensus between local communities and national authorities working with AU, RECs and partners on the rolling out of local government structures. One way of achieving this is to use relevant experiences from existing traditional and/or local modes of governance used by local communities. It is critical that local structures of governance are designed and implemented in a way that fosters mutual recognition, dialogue and peaceful coexistence and harnesses existing practices of intra and inter-community collaboration and systems of exchange and mutual support.

Additionally, the building or rebuilding of legitimate governance also provides space for and supports the empowerment and leveraging of the role of civil society and community groups in investing in and supporting the enhancement of locally legitimate mechanisms of dispute settlement and community dialogue.

In terms of the use of AU structures, the focus on establishing legitimate governance emphasizes the centrality of the mobilization of the resources of the AGA instruments and institutions. This should be geared towards translating the human rights and democratic governance norms and policies of the AU into operational guidelines that inform, shape and facilitate identification and recognition of the various governance issues, the engagement of national authorities for working with affected communities to address them and the creation of space and mechanisms for enabling the formulation through such engagement of the relevant governance solutions and processes.

Negotiation and dialogue with terrorist groups

The primacy of political strategy also entails not only dialogue and reconciliation horizontally at community level and vertically between the state and affected communities but also the use of a political process for ending the insurgency and violence involving terrorist groups. Indeed, as highlighted earlier the recognition of the essentially political, governance, and development

nature of the conflict dynamics in which insurgent groups identified as terrorists operate necessitates that negotiation and dialogue with members of such groups forms part of the political strategy for settling the conflict involving these groups. After a more than a decade and half of counterterrorism focused response to the threat Al Shabaab poses in Somalia and the region through the instrumentality of AMISOM, there is increasing recognition that ultimately the situation in Somalia has to be resolved through negotiation with Al Shabaab.

As proposed in our earlier report, in this context a major contribution of the AU would be to develop in consultation with member states and affected communities a strategy on negotiation and dialogue for peace in conflict situations involving terrorist groups. Such strategy helps in providing guidance on how to pursue negotiation and dialogue with terrorist groups having regard to the delicate issues of de-radicalization, accountability for and reconciliation with affected members of communities.

Humanitarian support and socio-economic development intervention

Given the various environmental, demographic and socio-economic factors that have increasingly affected the social equilibrium of communities experiencing conflicts and social pressures and tension, it is critical that the AU, RECs and partners also prioritize the delivery of assistance that help ease the immediate pressures facing communities. As pointed out in the Lake Chad Basin stabilization strategy this needs to focus on provision of life saving assistance for the displaced and those facing food insecurity and the creation of conditions including through the implementation of protection measures for the return and rehabilitation of IDPs as well as the provision of psycho-social support that is tailored to and in harmony with the traditions and practices of affected communities.

This needs to be accompanied with programs which as part of the rolling out of local governance

structures facilitate the delivery of key social services including health care, access to water, education and justice.

Rather than focusing on reinventing the wheel, the policy approach advanced in this report emphasizes investing in the rehabilitation of and providing support for the expansion of existing sources of livelihoods and making them more economically and ecologically sustainable and productive. Once again, a good example is the Lake Chad Basin strategy which, while on strengthening 'sustainable livelihoods, particularly farming, fishing and livestock rearing', envisages supporting adaptability and investment into critical value chain infrastructures to enhance the economic viability and sustainability of these economic activities.

Alongside rebuilding and expanding existing sources of livelihood, attention is also drawn to the importance of supporting sustainable mechanisms for management and shared use of natural resources, including through interventions that both rehabilitate depleted resources on which communities depend for their livelihood and support adaptation.

One aspect of the engagement of the AU and RECs that needs to be enhanced in bringing the focus of policy engagement that is centred on humanitarian support and socio-economic engagement is the need to mobilize the active role, expertise and technical resources of their non-security structures and institutions. In this respect, it is of particular significance that the AU PSC in its engagement on the theme of terrorism engages bodies such as Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the African Development Bank.

Providing capacity support for security forces to make them both able to fight effectively and legally professional and publicly legitimate

Given the fragilities and gaps in the security forces of many countries, there is a need for elevating their capacities. Enhancing the preparedness and capacity of forces should not just be about the fighting capacity of national forces. It should importantly also be about their professionalism, including in terms of strict adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law standards and protection of civilians and their local legitimacy including in terms of their skills and mindsets in treating local communities as agents of peace and stability and in assisting them in finding ways and means of resolving the security and local justice issues facing them.

It is critical that there is political will for a nationally owned security sector support programs and for regional and international security partnerships to be principally demand driven.

ANNEX-1

The existing state security centric approach		
Agency	Status of Operation	Relevant AU Policy Organ Decisions
African Centre for the Study & Research on Terrorism (ACSRT)	Active since its inauguration in 2004	Established in line with: Assembly/AU/Dec.15 (II); EX.CL/Dec.13 (II); EX/CL/Dec.82 (IV); and EX.CL/Dec.126 (V)
African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL)	Active since adoption of its Statutes in 2017	Established in line with Assembly/AU/Dec.636(XXVIII). Other relevant decisions include: Assembly/AU/Dec.750(XXXIII) and EX.CL/Dec.1073(XXXVI)

The existing state security centric approach		
ASF Specialised Unit on Counterterrorism	Not activated yet	PSC/AHG/COMM. (CDLV) (Communiqué of PSC's 455th Summit level Session): the need for recommendations on possible establishment of specialized joint counter-terrorism units at sub-regional and regional levels and within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) was discussed. PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLX) (Communiqué of PSC's 960th Session): discussed the proposal on the establishment of the Special Unit & requested the AU Commission to constitute a taskforce of relevant actors to provide guidance and submit concrete proposal on the technical aspects of the Unit's establishment
Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA)	Active since its inauguration in 2004	Assembly/AU/ Dec.62(IV) endorses the establishment of CISSA by the Heads of African intelligence and security services
PSC Sub-Committee on Counterterrorism	Not activated yet	At its 249th session, PSC decided to establish, as a subsidiary organ of Council, a Sub-Committee on Counter- terrorism, comprising 5 members of Council representing the different regions of the continent.

ANNEX-2

AU Counterterrorism Fund		
Fund	Status of Operation	Assembly/AU/ Dec.614 (XXVII) establishes the Special Fund
AU Special Fund on Prevention and Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism	Not yet operationalised	Assembly/AU/Dec.614 (XXVII) establishes the Special Fund

ANNEX-3

AUPSC Decisions on Terrorism			
Date	Session	Level	Outcome Document
22-Nov-10	249th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
08-Dec-11	303rd	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
12-Nov-21	341st	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
02-Sept-14	455th	Summit	Communiqué
23-Apr-15	499th	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
11-Sept-15	543rd	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
26-Nov-15	560th	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
29-Jan-16	571st	Summit	Communiqué
19-Apr-16	592nd	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
26-Apr-16	593rd	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
28-Sept-16	628th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
12-Dec-16	644th	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
17-Jan-17	650th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
23-May-17	687th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
22-Aug-17	711th	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
08-Nov-17	731st	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
27-Jan-18	749th	Summit	Communiqué
09-Apr-18	762nd	Ambassadorial	Press Statement
23-Nov-18	812th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
25-Apr-19	845th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
20-Oct-20	957th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué
28-Oct-20	960th	Ambassadorial	Communiqué

AUPSC Decisions on Terrorism			
30-Sept-21	1035th	Ministerial	Communiqué
22-Oct-21	1040th	Ministerial	Communiqué
15-Nov-21	1048th	Ministerial	Communiqué



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