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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1279th MEETING

14 MAY 2025
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1279 (2025)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1279th meeting on Discussion on Organized Transnational Crime, Peace and Security in the Sahel, held virtually on Wednesday, 14 May 2025.

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on Transnational Organized Crime, particularly Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1082 (2022)] adopted at its 1082nd meeting held on 6 May 2022; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1073 (2022) adopted at its 1073rd meeting held on 6 April 2022; and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1 (DCCCXLV)] adopted at its 850th meeting held on 25 April 2019;

Also recalling the AU Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, the 2014 United Nations Convention Against Organized Transnational Crime, the Protocols Against Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Small Arms and light weapons;

Expressing deep concern over the upsurge of organized transnational crimes involving, among others, drug and human trafficking, piracy, cyber- attacks, illicit financial flows, illegal logging and fishing, as well as the increasing use of new information and communication technologies, including artificial intelligence by criminal networks, armed and terrorist groups;

Reaffirming its commitment to the full implementation of the relevant AU instruments on Transnational Organized Crimes such as the June 2006 AU Migration Framework; the November 2006 Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking on Human Beings, especially Women and Children; the 2014 Niamey Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation; the August 2019 AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention 2019-2023; the December 2018 Enhancing Africa's Response to Transnational Organized Crimes Project; the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes as well as the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa;

Take note of the Opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Harold Bundu Saffa, Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) for the month of May 2025; and the introductory statement by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, read on his behalf by Dr. Jalel Chelab, Acting Director, African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL);

Also taking note of the presentations by the representatives of AFRIPOL, and of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), and by MS. Precious Tlhabiwa, the Special Representative of the International Police Organization (INTERPOL) to the AU, as well as the statements by AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs); and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council,

1. **Expresses grave concern** over the growing operational sophistication of transnational criminal networks exploiting structural vulnerabilities across the Sahel, including governance deficits, legitimate or popular grievances, porous borders, and limited state presence;
2. **Expresses concern over** the threat posed by hybrid criminal networks that engage in human, drugs, and arms trafficking as well as in environmental contraband, using community ties and corrupt practices to evade law enforcement;

3. **Emphasizes the need** for strengthening operational intelligence capabilities on the logistics routes used by trans-Saharan criminal networks, including mapping corridors such as Lagos-Kano-Agadez-Tripoli or Sebha-Arlit- Gao in real time, integrating interception data, migration flows and identified goods;
4. **Commends** AFRIPOL for its efforts and continued capacity building assistance to Member States; **applauds** the successful rollout of AFRIPOL's secure communication platform (AFSECOM), now equipped in all 55 AU Member States, and the operational connection of 40 National Liaison Offices (NLOs) and **encourages** AFRIPOL to expand its specialized training to include financial crime investigation, virtual assets tracing, and cybercrime detection in coordination with Member States and international partners;
5. **Welcomes** the adoption of the AFSECOM Rules and Regulations by the 12th Steering Committee and **looks forward** to their endorsement by the AFRIPOL General Assembly in 2025 and subsequent adoption by AU decision-making Organs;
6. **Also welcomes** AFRIPOL's leadership in establishing and operationalizing its Central Criminal Intelligence Analysis Unit (CCIA), which has provided Member States with actionable early warning and risk assessments in key Sahelian hotspots; and **applauds** the continued enhancement of AFRIPOL's secure communication platform (AFSECOM), which has been deployed across all 55 AU Member States, with 40 National Liaison Offices (NLOs) already connected and fully operational;
7. **Acknowledges** AFRIPOL's role in reinforcing investigative infrastructure by launching Regional Centres of Excellence and Forensic Laboratories to provide Member States with enhanced capacities in digital forensics, DNA, and ballistics analysis;
8. **Also commends** CISSA and INTERPOL for their efforts and continued assistance to Member States; and **encourages** them to enhance collaboration with national intelligence and law enforcement agencies;
9. **Calls on** Member States to further strengthen their national capacities, operational cooperation and information sharing on transnational organized criminal networks and to integrate AFRIPOL's criminal intelligence capabilities into national enforcement and security frameworks;
10. **Reiterates** the primary responsibility of Member States and the importance of collective security approaches in the fight against transnational organized crimes and, in the context, **encourages** those Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign, ratify, domesticate and implement all relevant regional, Continental and international instruments as well as promulgate necessary legislative and judicial measures, to combat money laundering and illicit financial flows, strengthen weapons management to mitigate illicit proliferation and circulation , promote joint border management and the recovery of misappropriated natural resources; and **also encourages** all Member States to ensure effective presence of state authority throughout their territories in order to deny territories from being exploited by criminals;
11. **Further encourages those** Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign, ratify and domesticate all regional, continental and international instruments for combat organized transnational crime;
12. **Requests** the AU Commission to coordinate with AFRIPOL, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other critical stakeholders in developing tailored responses to the specific geographical and logistical profiles of each criminal corridor, including joint mobile units and specialized port and desert surveillance capacities and further **requests** to address the

expansion of criminal activities in the Sahel and their negative impact on peace and stability, particularly the drying up of the financing sources for organized crime, including the production and sale of cannabis and other dangerous drugs in the continent;

13. **Stresses the need** for enhancement of synergies among AFRIPOL, CISSA and AUCTC; and the need to acquaint them with modern technologies relevant for combating the Organized Transnational Crime;

14. **Emphasizes the need** for Member States to holistically address the structural root causes and drivers of organized transnational crime in a comprehensive, coherent and integrated manner, including poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunity, and governance deficits;

15. **Emphasizes the importance** of further strengthening the institutional capacities of all AU mechanisms and frameworks responsible for fighting organized transnational crime, as well as to further strengthen the cooperation among these frameworks;

16. **Underscores the importance** of further strengthening all regional mechanisms responsible for combating organized transnational crime;

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17. **Recommends** the establishment of a continental mechanism, anchored by AFRIPOL, to continuously map, update, and analyze criminal flows and networks, and to disseminate this intelligence securely to law enforcement bodies across the continent;

18. **Urges** development partners, AU Member and RECs/RMs to support AFRIPOL with technical and financial resources, including capacity-building efforts in combating transnational organized crime in the Sahel, **takes note** in this regard the restructuring of AFRIPOL adopted by its General Assembly on 28 November 2024 to better fulfill its missions particularly the fight against transnational crime and **requests** the AU Commission to follow the due process for the consideration and adoption of the proposed new structure;

19. **Requests** the AU Commission, in coordination with AFRIPOL, AU Centre of Countering Terrorism and CISSA, to carry out a comprehensive study on organized transnational crime, peace and security in the Sahel region, detailing its nature, origin, sources of financing and impacts on local populations and to present the study to Peace and Security Council to further strengthening common African action in the fight against transnational crime; and

20. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter