

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

2ND ANNUAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE MEETING BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE MEDIATION AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL) 16 MAY 2025, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the Mediation and Security Council of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS MSC) held their 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting at Ambassadorial level, at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 16 May 2025. The Joint Consultative Meeting was convened to deliberate on governance, peace and security issues within the framework of the ongoing implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2030. The 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting coincided with the commemoration of the International Day of Living together in Peace, which is observed annually around the world, on 16 May;

The Joint Consultative Meeting was Co-Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Harold Bundu Saffa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the AU and Chairperson of the AU Peace and Security Council for May 2025 and H.E. Ambassador Musa Sani Nuhu, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to ECOWAS and Chair of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council. H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and H.E. Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security also participated and made statements at the Consultative meeting;

The 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting afforded opportunity to the AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC to **reaffirm** the primary responsibility of the AUPSC in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, in line with the provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the mandate of the ECOWAS MSC as outlined in the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security (1999), and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001). The AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC **acknowledged** the contribution made by the AU and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms in promoting peace in Africa;

The AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC **recalled** Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs and the 2020 Revised Protocol on Relations between the AU and RECs; as well as the Joint Communique of the Inaugural Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC, held on 24 April 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria;

Building on the Inaugural Annual Joint Consultative Meeting, the 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting was convened within the context of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of ECOWAS. As such, it provided opportunity for the AU PSC and ECOWAS MSC to deliberate on issues relating to governance, peace and security in the West African Region. More specifically, they reviewed the status of progress in the implementation of the joint commitments adopted at the Inaugural Annual

Joint Consultative Meeting while paying particular attention to issues relating to the harmonisation of decision-making processes, enhancement of coordination in the activities of the two Councils, common messaging and strengthening of synergies in the implementation of the APSA, AGA and AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030 at both the regional and Continental levels, based on the principles of subsidiarity, comparative advantages and complementarity. On the eve of the 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting on 15 May 2025, the ECOWAS MSC received briefings on the workings and activities of the AU Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, as well as the PSC Secretariat.

The 2nd Annual Joint Consultative Meeting focused on the following Agenda items:

- a) Economic Community of West African States' 50th Anniversary: Achievements, Challenges, and the Way Forward on Peace, Security, and Governance;
- b) Concerted Strategies to Counter terrorism and Violent Extremism in West Africa;
- c) Reflections on the Strengthening of Cooperation between the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC on Peace and Security; and
- d) Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the Inaugural Joint Consultations.

In this regard, the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC:

1. **Reaffirmed** commitment to continue to engage, towards strengthening collaboration and cooperation in the promotion of peace, security and stability in the West Africa Region;
2. **Acknowledged** the relentless efforts being deployed by ECOWAS in the promotion of good governance, peace, security, stability, development and regional integration in West Africa, and the significant milestones achieved in the 50 years of the existence of ECOWAS, including the pioneering efforts in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacekeeping, which were instrumental in addressing some of the most complex crises the Region has faced, particularly, in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and in The Gambia; as well as the establishment of key instruments such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, which provided for the establishment of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Mechanism and the ECOWAS Standby Force, the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, among others;
3. **Noted with deep concern** the slow pace in the transition processes in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger; **regretted** the formal withdrawal, on 29 January 2025, of the membership of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS, and the attendant consequences, particularly on the citizens of these countries, as well as the collective fight against terrorism and armed attacks in the West African Region; **recalled** the Final Communique of the Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on the Political, Peace and Security Situation in the Region, adopted on 24 February 2024; and in that regard, **urged** the three countries to expedite their political transition and return to constitutional order and to place the supreme interests of their countries and people above all else and to urgently reconsider their decision; **emphasized the need** for continued support, particularly towards addressing the dire humanitarian situation in the three countries and **reiterated the request** to the AU Commission and the ECOWAS Commission to continue engaging the three countries to rejoin ECOWAS; **Acknowledged** that insecurity has no borders and that addressing it in the ECOWAS Region requires multidimensional cooperation, and in this regard, **agreed** to develop a security cooperation framework involving the AU and ECOWAS engagement with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, in order to more effectively address insecurity in the West African Region;

4. **Encouraged** the Member States from the region to comprehensively address governance deficits, using inclusive and “whole of government/whole of society” approaches, and in a manner that directly responds to the legitimate grievances of the population as a conflict prevention measures and, in this regard, **encouraged** them to continue to fully uphold and adhere to the AU and ECOWAS shared values and instruments relating to the promotion of constitutionalism and good governance, particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, especially in relation to the principle of zero-tolerance for Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs);
5. **Stressed the need** for enhancing engagement with the youth on socio-economic activities in the communities in order to prevent their radicalization and the importance of harnessing the role of women in addressing peace, security and development challenges facing the region;
6. **Expressed deep concern** over the worsening insecurity resulting from the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa, particularly, in the Sahel region, with potential expansion to littoral states, which is adversely impacting peace, stability and development in the region;
7. **Underscore** the efforts of the AU Champion on counter-terrorism and violent extremism, President of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelamadjid Tebboune, in advancing AU agenda for combating terrorism and violent extremism;
8. **Reiterated the call** for the implementation of the Declaration [Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.(XVI)] on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo in Equatorial Guinea, as well as the Accra Declaration I and Conclusions of Accra II; and **stressed the need** for reinvigorating the Nouakchott Process, the ECOWAS Plan of Action Against Terrorism, the Accra Initiative, the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and the PSC Communique PSC/PR/COMM.1275 (2025) on the imperative of a combined maritime task force in addressing piracy in the Gulf of Guinea;
9. **Also reiterated the imperative** of holistically addressing the structural root causes and drivers of terrorism and violent extremism and **the need** to develop mechanisms for mitigating exogenous factors exacerbating conflicts in the region and throughout the Continent, including the influx of mercenaries and foreign fighters, the supply of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to terrorist networks, the increasing deployment of self-defense militias and the proliferation of and easy access to illicit small arms and light weapons;
10. **Called** for the establishment of a Joint Threat Fusion and Analysis Cell as part of the proposed AU–ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform, with the African Union Counter Terrorism Centre (AUCTC) designated as the continental coordination point, responsible for threat analysis, intelligence exchange, and technical support, and also for the establishment of an AU–ECOWAS Youth Resilience and Digital Empowerment Initiative to more effectively counter extremist narratives online, promote digital literacy and civic engagement, and support women and youth-led peacebuilding initiatives;
11. **Further reiterated** the call by the 38th Ordinary session of the AU Assembly for Member States to implement the Declaration of the High-Level African Counter-terrorism Meeting, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 22 to 23 April 2024, under the theme “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to address the Evolving Threats of Terrorism in Africa”;
12. **Underlined the urgent need** for reviewing the existing AU instruments for the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa, including the 1999 Convention on the prevention and combating

of terrorism and its 2004 Additional Protocol, as well as the 2002 AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating Terrorism in Africa;

13. **Emphasized the need** for Member States and international partners to continue to ensure zero tolerance for terrorism and violent extremism regardless of the claimed justifications and to take measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used by terrorists for the organization and/or financing of terrorist activities;

14. **Underscored** the imperative for enhanced cooperation and coordination of efforts, in the spirit of collective security, between and among countries of the ECOWAS region, and also among the United Nations, the AU and the RECs/RMs, on peace, security and stability in the region;

15. **Expressed concern** over the perennial challenge of lack of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for peace processes in the region and the Continent as a whole; **commended** the AU Commission for its relentless efforts towards addressing this challenge, including through the use of the AU Peace Fund Crisis Reserve Facility; and **underlined the imperative** for additional financial support to peace and security activities in the Continent, particularly, in West Africa and in this regard, encouraged continued engagements on the modalities for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023) to support AU peace support operations;

16. **Once again, agreed** to urgently explore innovative ways and means of upscaling resource mobilization from within the Continent, including through constructive engagements with the private sector, continental financial entities and philanthropists;

17. **Reaffirmed the commitment** to continue enhancing cooperation between the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC on Peace, Security and Governance issues , including by developing stronger and more structured cooperation on conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. In this respect, **underlined the need** to enhance Early Warning and joint analysis capabilities, and to further strengthen the synergy between the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), including joint scenario planning, data exchange, and rapid deployment of early response teams to contain potentially explosive situations ;

18. Stressed that peace enforcement is cardinal in all efforts aimed at achieving peace in the Sahel region and in this regard agreed to take steps to expedite the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF);

19. **Underscored the necessity** to continue prioritizing inclusive political dialogue as the most viable path towards consensus-building and sustainable solutions to some of the challenges facing the region;

20. **Also underscored the need** to ensure the full implementation of the outcomes of the joint consultative meetings, including the undertaking of joint field missions and joint brainstorming seminars; regular interaction between the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC Chairpersons on issues of common concern, including through the use of video-teleconferencing (VTC); swift communication of decisions on peace and security issues to each Council; joint retreats/brainstorming sessions; establishment of focal points in the Secretariats to facilitate a well-coordinated network for regular meetings/consultations, particularly of both Councils on issues in the agenda of the AU PSC and also in the agenda of the ECOWAS MSC; and organizing staff exchange visits;

21. **Encouraged** the AU Member States to attend the forthcoming ECOWAS 50th Anniversary commemorative event particularly the Summit level event dedicated to reflections on the future of regional integration in West Africa; and **also encouraged** the AU PSC Chairperson, accompanied by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security, to attend the ECOWAS MSC meetings at ministerial and ambassadorial levels; and

22. **Agreed** to convene the Third Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the two Councils in 2026, in Abuja, Nigeria, at a date to be mutually agreed.