

**Joint open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the
1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee on**

“ISIL in Africa: nature of threat and responses”

Thursday, 7 April 2022, 3:00 p.m.–6:00 p.m.

Opening remarks

of

**H.E. Mr. T. S. Tirumurti
Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee**

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

On behalf of Her Excellency Ms. Trine Heimerback and myself, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to today’s joint open briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee on the topic of “ISIL in Africa: nature of threat and responses”.

In the last five years, we have witnessed the significant rise of ISIL in Africa, as manifested by the territorial expansion of its affiliates, such as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, Islamic State Central Africa Province, Islamic State in West Africa Province, and other regional cells, taking into its fold many States.

ISIL’s aspirations on the continent significantly compound the conflict landscape and the already serious terrorist threats posed by Al-Qaida and its affiliates and other established groups such as Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram.

This is particularly apparent in the context of the Sahel, West Africa, and Lake Chad Basin regions, where ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates have posed an existential

threat to several States by exploiting local grievances, overwhelming stretched security forces, and navigating complex relationships between armed groups.

The authorities are challenged to dedicate even more attention, resources, and energy to addressing the threat of terrorist attacks, taking away capacity that is needed for other urgent matters such as economic development, education, and health.

ISIL's expansion in Africa deserves the full attention of the international community to ensure that this threat is not seen in isolation.

Terrorist threats, including that posed by ISIL and its affiliates in Africa, can directly impact peace and security in other parts of the world.

And, equally, terrorist threats and developments elsewhere, including in South and South-East Asia, can impact the terrorist threat in Africa.

It is therefore imperative for us to reaffirm our commitment to a “zero tolerance” approach to terrorism in its all forms and manifestations.

There can be no exception or justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of motivation, and wherever, whenever and by whomever it is committed.

As noted in paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), terrorism is “under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnical, religious or other similar nature”.

In addition to seeking a new centre of gravity outside its initial area of activity, the trajectory of ISIL and its affiliates in Africa discloses an insidious ambition to

continue to extend its influence by exploiting armed conflicts, vulnerabilities, and ethnic fault lines and undermining the peaceful aspirations of the societies upon which it preys.

ISIL's exploitation of local contexts, pre-existing tensions, and grievances has underlined its propaganda and recruitment tactics.

It is important to understand these complexities in order to bring appropriate and effective responses.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

In partnership with the ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate have closely monitored these developments and the responses thus far.

Since 2015, CTED, the Monitoring Team and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism have prepared strategic-level reports every six months on behalf of the Secretary-General, which reflect the gravity of the threat posed by ISIL and highlight the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

ISIL affiliates have established a presence in all regions of Africa. The increased use of narratives by ISIL — presenting the continent at the core of its fight and showcasing the increased volume of attacks perpetrated by ISIL affiliates, which have caused a large number of casualties — clearly demonstrates its interest in Africa.

In several African States where terrorist groups, including ISIL affiliates, have preyed upon local grievances and tensions, globally aligned and operationally connected terrorism is being pursued as a part of, and alongside, other local movements pursuing specific political and economic goals at the local and national levels.

This has meant that attempts to resolve local conflicts are sometimes undertaken alongside counter terrorism operations and strategies.

It is important to recognize that ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates aim to destabilize democratic institutions and take advantage of intercommunal conflict.

Their goals are incompatible with reinforcing the constitutional goals of internationally-supported peace processes.

The risk that a national stabilization effort may offer an opportunity for an ISIL or Al-Qaida-affiliated group to attain State power without disavowing its affiliation with terrorism should not be underestimated.

It is important to distinguish between political ideologies in a constitutional framework and radical and terrorist ideologies of terrorist groups operating outside the constitutional framework.

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

Today's joint open briefing will address two key aspects.

The first session will examine the nature of the threat posed by ISIL in Africa today, how it has evolved to become what it is, and what has driven this expansion.

Speakers from the 1267 Monitoring Team, Kenya, the Global Center on Cooperative Security, and the Institute for Security Studies will share with us their expertise and perspective.

The second session will pivot to explore the responses developed to counter ISIL's threat, gauge progress made in that respect, and assess remaining challenges.

Representatives of CTED and two other affected States, Nigeria and Chad, will provide us with their insights, including the perspectives of civil society gathered by CTED during two round tables held last autumn.

It is also our intent to reserve sufficient time for a robust question-and-answer session and encourage interventions from participants who are present in the ECOSOC Chamber.

It is my hope that the various perspectives brought by Member States, UN agencies, researchers, and civil society today will help us to raise awareness of the threat posed by ISIL in Africa and also to better grasp how we can collectively strengthen our responses.

I invite speakers to make their interventions concrete and frank and not to shy away from asking difficult questions.

What is at stake here, for Africa and beyond, is too important for that.

Thank you.