

ABRIDGED STATEMENT

DELIVERED BY

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NIGERIA'S OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER (ONSA)

AT THE

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"

RESPONSES, PROGRESS ACHIEVED, AND CHALLENGES

THURSDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2022

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) CHAMBER,  
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

3:00PM – 6:00PM

*Please check against delivery*

Chair Counter-Terrorism Committee, **H.E. T. S. Tirumurti**,  
Chair Da'esh and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, **Trine Hiemerback**,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at the outset thank the Chairs of the CTC and the Da'esh/Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee for inviting Nigeria to brief on the responses, progress, and challenges in addressing the threat of Da'esh in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin regions. This meeting is a welcome development as the persistent threat of terrorism in the regions necessitates collective action by affected states and international partners to strengthen national, regional and global responses.

**Excellencies,**

2. The surge of lethal attacks against civilian and military targets by terrorist groups in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions, now rank amongst the deadliest in the world. The worrisome affiliation of these groups with international terror networks such as Da'esh and Al-Qaeda continues to strengthen their ability to receive funding, weapons, training, and operational guidance, as well as recruit, in order to carry out more heinous attacks.

3. Da'esh continues to actively support its franchises in the region, including Boko Haram off-shoot Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) operating in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad, as well as Islamic State Greater Sahara (ISGS) operating mostly in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. This relationship played a vital role in ISWAP becoming the most powerful faction of Boko Haram following its decimation of the Abubakar Shekau-led faction.

### **Regional Collective/National Responses and Achievements**

4. The threat to security and livelihood posed by ISWAP and ISGS, which overlap into neighbouring countries, have consistently been met with greater kinetic military operations and non-kinetic stabilisation response by the Governments of the regions.

### **Regional Responses.**

5. So far, the most effective regional response to curtail the threat of ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin region has been the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), comprising of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Additionally, MNJTF's military response has greatly benefited from the support and flow of information from the Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU).

#### **National Responses.**

6. At the national level, Nigeria launched full military operations in the North-East of the country, Code named Operation **Hadin Kai**, to tackle the threat posed by the ISWAP and JAS. The concerted responses of the Nigerian Military and MNJTF have recorded several achievements, most notably the decimation of the group's command and control structure, including the death of its infamous leader Abu Musab al-Barnawi. In addition to the death of many insurgents, thousands of the terrorist combatants and non-combatants, alongside their families, have been compelled to lay down their arms to Security Forces.

#### **Non-Kinetic Responses.**

7. On the non-kinetic approach; Nigeria's measures have included strengthening legislative framework, reviewing operational strategies and policies as well as strengthening governance delivery. In complementing our law enforcement and military efforts, Nigeria is actively pursuing the implementation of its Policy Framework and National Action plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism to address the root causes of violent extremism and ensure that homegrown terrorism does not take root.

#### **Operation Safe Corridor.**

8. Operation Safe Corridor offers willing and repenting terrorists' opportunity to hand themselves in to military authorities, undergo a process of de-radicalisation over a period of time before being reinserted into the society. The program has improved substantially since its creation in 2016. It has thus far worked with almost 1,000 individuals, showing insurgents that defecting is possible.

#### **Prosecution of Suspects.**

9. Nigerian Government has also recorded progress in our criminal justice response to the scourge of terrorism. Under the Terrorism Prevention Act 2013 as amended, we have successfully prosecuted over 1,500 suspected terrorists with over 400 convictions. We are also in the process of conducting the trials of another 1,500 suspected terrorists with marked improvement in the judicial process as compared to the first trial. This highlights our commitment in ensuring that our response to terrorism is not only effective but also rule of law compliant. A necessity to ensure that the people have faith in the judicial system.

#### **Establishment of the Nigeria Sanctions Committee.**

10. The Nigerian Sanctions Committee (NSC) was inaugurated on 19 Jan 2018 to drive the implementation of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1267 and 1988. The NSC is charged with the responsibility to immediately freeze funds and other financial assets or economic resources of individuals and entities designated on the ISIL or Al-Qaida Sanctions List.

#### **Identification Of Boko Haram Sponsors.**

11. The Nigerian Government has identified 96 financiers of JAS and ISWAP. This was made possible through intelligence exchanges on Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, kidnapping and others with 19 partner countries as obtained by the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) between 2020 to 2021. It will be recalled that the United Arab Emirate (UAE) had convicted 6 Nigerians for supporting Boko Haram while the United States have designated the individuals and imposed sanctions.

#### **Challenges**

12. ISWAP's access to funding, recruits and weapons remains a major threat to progress in the fight against terrorism in the region. Specifically, the movement of weapon stockpiles by Da'esh affiliates in Libya into insurgent sanctuaries in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin (LCB) continue to enhance their capabilities to carry out fresh attacks.

13. Given the vast and porous borders along many states in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, proceeds from transnational organized crimes (TOCs), including illicit smuggling of natural resources, drug and human trafficking, are able to make their

way into the hands of terrorist. This necessitates the strengthening of regional border security cooperation to diminish the thriving atmosphere of TOCs in the West African sub region.

14. Nigeria now faces an increased threat of banditry within the North- West region, with growing cooperation between the terrorist and bandits. Likewise, kidnapping and mass abduction of students for ransome has evolved as major source of funding for bandits and terrorists and is fast becoming the greatest threat to education in the country. We have seen in recent weeks that the unholy alliance between bandits and terrorist has the potential of to increase the threat to vunlerable targets and critical infrastructure.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

15. While Nigeria spear-heads the funding for the MNJTF, we have received proposals to replicate similar operations within our Northwest corridor linking Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso due to the increasing threat of banditry. This highlights the need for wider financial support, including through the United Nations, to tackle the ever-growing threat of terrorism in Africa. As such, adequate, sustainable and predictable funding from the UN to the African Union (AU), could provide military coalitions, including the MNJTF and G5-Sahel Force, a firmer advantage against these terrorists.

16. In closing let me reiterate Nigeria's commitment to continue working with our neighbors and international partners to rid the region of the threat of terrorism through collaborative military solutions, harmonized policies and strategies as well as sharing of best practices.

17. I thank you.