



R /153/44 (2022)

**Contribution of parliaments to combating terrorism and violent extremism:
mitigating the effects of this scourge by promoting sound democratic governance**

*Resolution adopted by the 44th Conference
(Victoria Falls, 10 november 2022)*

*The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 44th Conference on 9-10 November 2022 in
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe,*

Very concerned about the persistence of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism,
particularly in parts of the African continent,

Stressing the importance of democratic governance in the political and economic
management of States,

Affirming that terrorism is neither the product of a religion nor consubstantial with a
religion, but develops in the presence of extremist ideologies, feeds on the governance
deficits of States and situations of social insecurity and exploits fragile socioeconomic
conditions to its advantage,

Reaffirming that poverty, religious radicalism, civil, political and military conflicts, internal
tensions, organized crime and illegal migration are sources of the emergence and
expansion of terrorism in Africa,

Convinced that one of the root causes of terrorism and the rise of violent extremism is
the crisis of the relationship between States and societies, often resulting from a poor
distribution of State resources between urban centres and peripheral or rural areas, from
social injustices felt by certain groups, and from authoritarian reactive strategies that are
sometimes assimilated to repression, and are counter-productive,

Concerned about the rise in unemployment among young people, which constitutes a
major risk for this category of the population to become radicalized and to be exposed to
recruitment by terrorist groups,

Stressing the importance of traditional and religious leaders in the prevention of
terrorism and violent extremism,

Aware of the crucial role played by parliaments in preventing and combating terrorism
and violent extremism as important levers in the governance system

Stressing that parliaments play a central role in adopting policies and creating the conditions for peace, as they have leverage over legislative instruments and budgetary allocations and are at the centre of the oversight of executive action,

Aware that the fight against terrorism requires an inclusive societal approach that parliaments can implement by taking into account the interests of the people and by focusing particularly on vulnerable groups at risk of radicalization,

Taking note that extremist movements exploit the precarious situation of young people by offering them answers to their existential questions,

Convinced that young people living in poverty are usually economically and socially marginalized and can therefore be drawn into terrorism and violent extremism,

Noting that national budgets for the defence and security forces are generally more heavily funded, often to the detriment of other key sectors such as the education and social sectors,

Stressing that the military or repressive approach is not the only solution to terrorism and violent extremism and that parliaments have an important role to play in ensuring that governments focus on eradicating the root causes of these scourges, including by promoting the adoption of policies that foster good governance

Stressing that the transnational nature of terrorism and violent extremism also requires regional strategies to combat it

Recalling:

- The African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (Algiers, 1999) and its Additional Protocol (Addis Ababa, 2004),
- The United Nations International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (New York, 1999);
- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (New York, 2006) and the United Nations Plan of Action on the Prevention of Violent Extremism (New York, 2016);
- Its resolution on combating terrorism, armed groups and organized crime in Africa (41st Conference, Abuja, 2018).

1. *Calls upon* parliaments to review and focus their efforts, on the one hand, on the factors that contribute to radicalization and violent extremism, such as conflict and poverty, marginalization, socioeconomic and political discrimination and exclusion, unemployment, human rights violations, lack of the rule of law and poor governance; and on the other, on promoting inter-faith dialogue in order to counter the extremists' propaganda based on "the clash of civilizations";

2. *Invites* parliamentarians to tackle the root of the problem by adopting a grassroots approach to vulnerable groups at risk of radicalization as well as to actors at the community level, in particular women, young people, customary and religious authorities, who have the potential to contribute to social cohesion and to the redefinition of the social contract and the relationship between State and society;

3. *Affirms* that the prevention of violent extremism among young people requires the fight against the factors that lead to radicalization, which requires the strengthening of the State's capacity to adopt the principles of good governance that are essential for political, economic and social development;

4. *Urges* States to adopt policies that promote good democratic governance, socioeconomic opportunities, education, infrastructure and the development of rural areas;

5. *Calls upon* African States and national parliaments to implement, upstream, public policies and invest in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, and downstream, to provide responses other than military and prison sentences, when it does not have to do with blood crimes, to individuals who renounce violence, by integrating them into preventive strategies such as programmes for the disengagement and rehabilitation of violent extremists, as well as providing compensation to victims of terrorism;

6. *Affirms* that the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism requires the development of policies that focus on:

- Dialogue and conflict prevention
- Strengthening good governance, human rights and the rule of law, including the holding of regular, free, transparent, peaceful and credible elections and respect for democratic alternation of power
- Equitable distribution of State resources between urban centres and peripheral areas
- Decentralization and local governance
- Community involvement
- Formal and informal mediation mechanisms
- Promoting participation in politics and public affairs management by the youth and women
- Youth empowerment
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Compulsory basic education, vocational training, skills development and job creation
- Strategic and responsible communications on the internet and social networks.

7. *Calls on* Parliaments and Governments to take measures to reduce the cost of government as a means of bringing those in power closer to the citizens;

8. *Calls upon* African Parliamentarians to pay particular attention to radicalization and terrorist recruitment among young people by supporting, on the one hand, public policies aimed at fighting youth unemployment, by offering alternatives through vocational training and entrepreneurship (including the establishment of agencies for the promotion of SMEs) as well as sports and cultural programmes, and on the other hand, educational programmes focused on teaching the values of human dignity, diversity and tolerance ;

9. *Calls on* States to undertake deradicalization actions through, by re-establishing and consolidating a faith-based reference system and principles founded on moderation, openness and tolerance;

10. *Urges* parliaments to promote the empowerment and active involvement of women and young people in decision-making and the development of relevant strategies, action plans and initiatives to prevent violent extremism and combat terrorism;

11. *Calls upon* States to make greater efforts to prevent violence, build resilience to radicalization and hate speech and develop democratic governance by improving government institutions through broad community participation;

12. *Calls on* parliaments, in consultation with governments, to implement policies to encourage young people to take ownership of the benefits of peace, diversity and mutual respect and to be actors rather than perpetrators in the fight against violent extremism;

13. *Calls for* an enhanced role for young people in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, by developing new ways of organizing their political action and generating platforms for dialogue;

14. *Urges* parliamentarians to work with local authorities and civil society to strengthen their role in promoting youth participation in development projects aimed at reducing inequalities and consolidating peace;

15. *Recommends* that the capacities of States, including parliaments, be strengthened to prevent the spread of extremism and terrorism among young people, particularly in post-conflict situations, by encouraging young people to participate in political, economic and social life;

16. *Calls for* the consideration at the national and international levels of the root causes of youth radicalization, and for the adoption of a holistic approach to eliminating terrorism and violent extremism;

17. *Calls on* Parliaments to urge their Governments to adopt comprehensive and multi-sectoral strategies and to garner support from various components of society, including the private sector; these strategies should open channels for dialogue at different levels in order to promote regional integration of States and peoples as well as actions for peace and economic and social development;

18. *Also calls on* parliaments to adapt national legislation to regional and international conventions on counter-terrorism and the criminalization of extremism;

19. *Calls upon* Governments to promote regional and subregional cooperation against terrorism at all levels, including in legislative matters, which will make it possible to create conditions conducive to security, the integration of States, economic development, peace and stability on the continent;

20. *Reiterates* its call upon African States, which have not yet done so, to ratify the international instruments on human development, human rights and refugees, international humanitarian law, cooperation and mutual legal assistance, and on combating terrorism and its financing.

21. *Encourages* Parliaments to collaborate with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to step up their initiatives and capacities for combating terrorism and violent extremism;

22. *Invites* parliaments to appoint representatives to attend meetings with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism;

23. *Recommends* the creation of a platform for sharing and exchanging information on terrorism and violent extremism among the parliamentarians of the Executive Committee.