

## **UNODC and SADC collaborate to support the Southern African countries to counter the growing threat of terrorism in the region**



*Lilongwe (Malawi), 29 July 2022* – In recent years, the threat of terrorism in Southern Africa has become more widespread, with terrorist groups seeking to expand their regional presence and networks by using social media, foreign fighters, and illegal trafficking to support their terrorist goals.

One of these groups, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISCAP) in Central Africa, has established a strong presence in the region, and is estimated to have as many as 2,000 local recruits and fighters from Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

In response to such threats, many countries in the region, including the Republic of Malawi, are making efforts to strengthen their capacity to effectively detect and prevent terrorist activity and bring terrorists to justice.

To support these efforts, UNODC has joined the [Southern African Development Community](#) (SADC) through its recently established Regional Counter Terrorism Centre and the African Union's African Centre for the Study and Research of Terrorism (AU/ACSRT) and launched, in April 2022, a second phase of assistance for the region, under a project of the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF), funded by the People's Republic of China.

Through this project, UNODC and its regional partners will provide legislative advice, as well as support to build the capacities of SADC countries to counter terrorism and related organized crime threats, through the sharing of international and regional good practices and standards, while promoting South-South cooperation within countries in Southern Africa.

As part of this project, from 25 to 29 July the Government of the Republic of Malawi hosted a roundtable in Lilongwe of national counter terrorism stakeholders, as well as UNODC, SADC, AU/ACSRT and international experts.

This provided an important opportunity to examine national and regional threats and challenges, international approaches and to take stock of the national efforts already underway.

“There is a risk of collaboration of terrorist and violent extremist organizations with transnational organized crime syndicates for financing and material supply”, stressed Ms. Mauna Bagwasi of the AU/ACSRT.

Going forward the stakeholders identified the need for legislation and a national strategy to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism in Malawi.

SADC’s Regional Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Mr. Mumbi Mulenga, on the other hand, stressed the importance of partnerships, information sharing and all forms of cooperation to fight terrorism and violent extremism in SADC member States.

In addition to the roundtable, UNODC facilitated a national training exercise on 27 and 28 July for law enforcement and criminal justice officers, which provided a forum to identify challenges presented by complex terrorism cases, and approaches for effective rule-of-law based investigations and prosecutions of related crimes.

“Terrorism and violent extremism undermine peace and security, divide communities, destabilize entire regions and hamper efforts to protect human rights and sustainable development”, finally highlighted Minister of Homeland Security of Malawi, H.E. Jean Sendeza, as he thanked UNODC, SADC and AU/ACSRT for the support provided in countering these crimes.

A news article on the activities can be found in the Marawi Post:

<https://www.maravipost.com/malawi-joins-sadc-member-states-against-terrorism/>

