



**Statement by His Excellency, Dr Julius  
Maada Bio, President of the Republic of  
Sierra Leone at the Extraordinary  
Summit of ECOWAS Heads of State and  
Government On Terrorism**

Your Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I bring warm greetings from the Government and people of Sierra Leone. **Let me join in thanking Honourable Ministers and Service and Defence Chiefs for this very thoughtful and comprehensive document that addresses a clear and present danger for our region.**

Let me express our heartfelt sympathy for and solidarity with our sister countries at the loss of innocent citizens during the spate of recent terrorist attacks across the sub-region. These persistent attacks pose grave danger to the resilience of our sister countries and our region.

**We face cross-cutting challenges in the fight against terrorism that demand heightened engagements and multilateral cooperation across the region.**

At the 55<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government in Abuja, I enjoined Your Excellences that **the fight against terrorism is not simply a Sahelian affair and that we must prioritise intelligence sharing and**

**coordination as an integral component of the strategy to fight terrorism in the ECOWAS region.**

I am gratified that there is also consensus that military and security approaches alone will not effectively address terrorism, and that a civil-society-civilian stakeholder component is also critical. **The Government of Sierra Leone therefore takes note of the ECOWAS commission's proposal of eight (8) critical pillars as immediate and short-term measures that will form the basis for the 2020-2022 Emergency Action Plan** that the Commission has been directed to prepare.

**But beyond the rhetoric, Your Excellences, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, how do we operationalise those critical pillars?**

**First, I urge colleagues to support the ECOWAS Standby Force (a brigade-sized unit) as a coherent regional force that augments and complements the capacity of existing military forces** in fighting and containing the spread of terrorism.

That force may also help in harmonising operational philosophies and procedures among our region's armed forces. To that end, we must speedily deploy equipment and pursue other capacity-building arrangements to bolster our region's military forces.

I therefore urge Your Excellences and the ECOWAS Commission to speedily operationalize and closely monitor the implementation of Phases 2 and 3 of the ECOWAS Standby Force Logistics Depot which Sierra Leone is hosting at Lungi. Delaying the operationalization of the logistics depot is a dangerous calculation.

**Secondly, I urge Your Excellences to view the sub-region as our neighbourhood** and to ensure that our neighbourhood is free of strife and the danger of terrorism. **We must therefore quickly operationalise a coherent plan for collecting, processing, and sharing timely and actionable intelligence on terrorist activities and movements across the entire region.** We must therefore invest resources into a comprehensive and effective strategy to achieve this.

**Thirdly, I urge the ECOWAS Commission to closely examine legal, policy, and institutional frameworks**

**across the region that address the threat of terrorism.**

The region must tackle extremist violence, terrorism, transnational crime in an organised and harmonised manner.

**Finally, I urge Your Excellences to impress on civil society stakeholders that national development and resilience depend on security.** We must therefore map out clear and coherent ways in which civil society actors can help governments communicate with populations, build trust, defuse the triggers of conflict, support equitable and accountable governance that creates opportunity, and supports peacebuilding.