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# 147th IPU Assembly

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## Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

### *The global response to the Call of the Sahel*

Wednesday, 25 October 2023, 14:00–18:30, Tenda 2, ground floor

#### Concept note

##### 1. Introduction

The First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism took place in Vienna in September 2021, during which a parliamentary bloc agreed on a joint declaration regarding the existential threat facing the people of the Sahel and their statehoods. ([First Summit documents](#))

As a consequence of this declaration, the IPU has prioritized the *Call of the Sahel* initiative. This has led to the organization of the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism which will take place on 25 October 2023 in Luanda at a time when the Sahel region in Africa is in a precarious situation. This region has been highly vulnerable for a long time. It continues to face recurring conflicts, terrorism threats and coup d'états are on the rise – eight since 2020 – all of which, besides other important factors, hinder democratic progress, contribute to political instability and insecurity, and lead to the displacement of entire populations and sentiments of discontent and frustration from sections of society.

Military coups leaders, with wide public support, have overthrown presidents and governments, expressing the discontent of societies, youth and women who are tired of the instability and insecurity in their countries. Despite international cooperation, many citizens are unaware of its real impact on their communities and lives, as well as on the fight against terrorism which is increasing and provoking increased displacement. Armed groups reportedly carried out more than 800 deadly attacks last year. Such violence uprooted some 450,000 people within their countries and forced a further 36,000 to flee into a neighbouring country, affecting entire communities and leaving 2.5 million people displaced. The number of refugees in the Central Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger now stands at 410,000.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the development of the Sahel region countries is stagnant and faces multiple challenges. The countries in the region dominate the category of least developed countries (LDCs). There are currently 46 economies in the world (33 are from Africa, of which 7 countries are from the Sahel) designated by the United Nations as LDCs with the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development. Despite their riches in natural resources, in 2020, 32 million people in the LDCs were in extreme poverty (living on less than US\$ 1.90 a day).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger is rapidly deteriorating amid crises on multiple fronts. Insecurity is the main driver, made worse by extreme poverty and the worsening effects of the climate crisis, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of access to opportunities for young people.

<sup>1</sup> Press briefing by UNHCR spokesperson Boris Cheshirkov – 14 January 2022.

<sup>2</sup> UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries Report 2022*.

Effectively addressing this complex situation necessitates a deep understanding of the political dynamics from an African perspective. By comprehending the prevailing sentiments among African populations, we can undertake appropriate initiatives to diminish the influence of armed groups and ensure the safety of local communities. Achieving these objectives requires strong collaboration with global and regional partners to tackle the complex security challenges at hand.

Development-based crisis management is considered to be essential in the Sahel, where political, economic and security issues are intricately linked to underdevelopment, further exacerbated by corruption. Urgent action is needed to tackle immediate concerns like food insecurity, water access and healthcare, while also emphasizing long-term development for resilience, economic growth and stability. Prioritizing development and anti-corruption efforts provide a path towards a brighter, more secure Sahel, meeting the needs of present and future generations.

## 2. Background

In June 2019, a regional conference on countering terrorism and violent extremism was held in Niamey, Niger, during which the IPU witnessed and urged the parliamentarians' community to address the complex situation in the Sahel region.

In September 2021, during the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism in Vienna, Austria, parliamentarians discussed how to build pathways to peace and a better future for all populations, including the victims of terrorism, with a special focus on the Sahel. The Summit's deliberations resulted in the *Call of the Sahel (The Call)*, a joint declaration in which parliamentarians called for peace and sustainable development in the region to be supported. A joint parliamentary alliance (the IPU, the Arab Parliament, the Inter Parliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean) was established to coordinate the work of *The Call*. The bloc also cooperates closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The aim is to achieve concrete results by assisting and supporting the Sahel countries through a holistic approach in five key areas: environment, community, security, education and development.

Five thematic meetings on these key areas were convened to listen to the people of the Sahel. Three thematic meetings were held in Kigali (Rwanda), Manama (Bahrain), Algiers (Algeria) and the last two took place in Geneva (Switzerland). Each meeting produced recommendations that will be presented at this Second Summit as *The global response to the Call of the Sahel*. The response includes a roadmap with various steps and activities to be followed that will contribute to the development of the people of the Sahel while reducing the prevalence of terrorism and organized crime. Additionally, the roadmap presents alternatives to prevent violent extremism in the Sahel region.

The IPU's 2022-2026 strategy seeks overall to develop parliamentary ecosystems for democracy. The *Call of the Sahel* was drafted in the spirit of this strategy. It prioritizes all the key policy areas identified by the strategy, including peace and security; democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation; climate change; and sustainable development for all. The ecosystem approach means that the IPU will focus on engaging with a wide array of stakeholders who influence parliaments, parliamentarians and their broader societies. It remains a priority to ensure that activities are driven by the needs of the Sahel and by voices from the region.

## 3. Objectives

The Second Global Parliamentary Summit will aim to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including parliamentarians from around the world, the United Nations, experts from international organizations, members of regional Parliamentary Assemblies, representatives of civil society, and community leaders. It will address the situation in the Sahel countries, in a bid to:

- Understand and address the nexus between good governance, coups d'état, corruption and the proliferation of terrorism and violent extremism.
- Address the different perspectives of the Sahel crisis, its historical legacy and the search for a sustainable solution.
- Transform global efforts, world strategies and international resolutions into concrete actions on the ground with meaningful impact in supporting the Sahel region.
- Foster awareness and provide support for an African solution to the African crisis with the global solidarity.

## **Date and venue**

The Summit will take place on Wednesday, 25 October in Luanda, Angola from 14:00 to 18:30, Tenda 2.

## **Programme**

The Summit will begin with a high-level segment, including the President of the National Assembly of Angola, the IPU President and the President of the Qatari Shura Council.

It will be followed by keynote speakers on the subject by, acting Chairperson of the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG), United Nations Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel (TBC), the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of UNODC (TBC), the Executive Chairman and Founder of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

After the high-level segment, there will be three thematic sessions on various topics related to counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism.

### **Session 1: *The Call of the Sahel: The wind of change***

*The session will address the political issues in the region by analyzing the nexus between coups d'état, governance, corruption and the proliferation of terrorism as existential threats to the people of the Sahel.*

### **Session 2: *Sahel's rising generation: The struggle to be heard***

*The session will discuss the challenges faced by the youth in the region, their future prospect, and why there is a lack of attention and concern for Africa. The Sahel region presents the highest population and fertility growth in the world, with a high number of young people, especially women, who could prove to be a labour force in the area.*

### **Session 3: *The Call of the Sahel: Development is the answer***

*The crisis in the Sahel will only be addressed through development. Presentations of the outcomes of the five thematic meetings, effective strategies and best practices with a positive impact on the ground will be given.*

### **Session 4: *Presentation of the Call of the Sahel***

*Closing remarks and conclusions of the Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism by the IPU Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong.*

## **4. Contact details.**

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