



## OFFICIAL STATEMENT

**H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, IGAD Executive Secretary**

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### **High Level Regional Forum on the IGAD Regional Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (RCCM) against Transnational Security Threats (TSTs) Statute and Operationalization**

17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 | Mombasa

- Your Excellency, **Amb. Mohamed Ali Hassan**, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Djibouti and representing the IGAD Chair;
- Our host your Excellency **George N. Macgoye**, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Djibouti
- Your Excellency **Birhanu Tsegaye**, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Djibouti
- Your Excellency **Ahmed Mohamed Khaire**, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Djibouti
- Your Excellency **Natalina Edward Mou**, Ambassador of the Republic of South Sudan to Ethiopia and accredited to IGAD
- Your Excellency **Philip Matthew Rukikaire**, Ambassador of the Republic of Uganda to Ethiopia and accredited to IGAD
- Esteemed Security Sector Experts, Partners and Stakeholders,
- IGAD Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

#### **Introduction**

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1. Good morning and welcome to this important High-Level Regional Forum on the IGAD Regional Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism against Transnational Security Threats.



2. We also convene to operationalize the IGAD Statute for the Establishment of Cooperation and Coordination Mechanisms Against Transnational Security Threats. We are here not just as representatives of our respective nations, but as custodians of the safety, stability, and prosperity of our brothers and sisters in IGAD.
3. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Republic of Kenya for graciously hosting this meeting in the beautiful city of Mombasa.
4. Your hospitality is a testament to Kenya's commitment to regional cooperation and security. We are grateful for your support and for providing us with a conducive environment to engage in these critical discussions.
5. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the IGAD Peace and Security Team. In particular, I want to acknowledge Ms. Nejat Abdulrahman and her leadership of the IGAD Security Sector Program. Your unwavering commitment has been instrumental in laying the groundwork for our discussions today and for advancing our collective security agenda.
6. Our region, which is home to over 300 million people, is a land of extraordinary diversity and immense potential. Yet, it is also a region that faces significant challenges, many of which transcend borders.
7. We are no strangers to the threats of terrorism, human trafficking, cybercrime, and the illegal arms trade. These are threats that have disrupted lives, weakened economies, and tested the resilience of our nations.



8. For instance, the growing prevalence of organized crime, with reported incidents rising by 30% in recent years, is a stark reminder of what is at stake. Similarly, the annual cybersecurity report estimates that the global cybercrime economy is valued at 9.5 trillion dollars a year or 793 billion USD a month in 2024, highlighting the scale of the challenges we must confront together.
9. This is why this Regional Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism against Transnational Security Threats is so important. It is not just another mechanism but our commitment to working together to confront these threats head-on.
10. Building on the foundation laid by IGAD's Security Sector Program, this mechanism is designed to enable us to share intelligence more effectively, harmonize our legal frameworks, and strengthen our capacity to respond to threats as a unified region.
11. We have already made significant strides. For example, IGAD's conventions on Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition, though awaiting broader ratification, have set the groundwork for legal coordination across borders.
12. The establishment of the IGAD Criminal Information System (ICIS) promises to revolutionize how we collect and share intelligence, making our responses faster and more effective. Additionally, the capacity-building workshops held since 2014 have equipped over 2,000 of our security professionals with the skills needed to tackle these complex challenges.



13. But we must also acknowledge the obstacles we face. Key conventions remain to be ratified, and resource limitations continue to slow our progress. These challenges represent opportunities to strengthen our resolve and deepen our partnerships while building on multilateral approaches.
14. Our collaboration with the European Union, which has provided over 10 million euros through the Africa Peace and Security Architecture, is a testament to what we can achieve when we work together with determination and focus.
15. As we move toward operationalizing the Regional Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism against Transnational Security Threats, I urge every Member State to act swiftly in ratifying and domesticating the Statute.
16. We must also empower our national focal points, ensuring they have the resources and authority to act effectively. Let us commit to fully utilizing the tools provided by the IGAD Statute for Establishment of Cooperation and Coordination Mechanisms Against Transnational Security Threats and frameworks for joint planning and operations so that this mechanism becomes a force for real and measurable change.
17. Looking ahead, let us imagine a region where our shared security challenges are met with shared solutions; where criminal networks are dismantled through coordinated intelligence, where regional cooperation becomes a model for the world to follow.



18. Let us also remember that true security comes not just from our governments but from our communities, civil society, local leaders, and citizens all have a role to play in creating the kind of region we aspire to.
  
19. As we move forward in this forum, let us take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to this shared vision. The decisions we make today and the actions we take in the coming months will shape the future of our region. This is not just about securing our borders; it is about protecting the lives and livelihoods of millions who depend on us to act decisively and wisely.
  
20. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Regional Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism against Transnational Security Threats and its accompanying statute is a blueprint for a safer, stronger, and more united IGAD region. But a blueprint is only as good as the will to bring it to life.
  
21. Together, let us ensure that this framework leads to tangible results. Let us work hand in hand to create a legacy of peace, resilience, and hope for generations to come.

**Thank you all for your commitment to this vital cause.**