

**SPEECH BY DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX (MP), MINISTER  
FOR DEFENSE AND NATIONAL SERVICE, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE  
SADC REGIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM CENTRE  
28 FEBRUARY 2022**

**Her Excellency Ambassador Liberata Mulamula (MP)**, Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation

**Honorable Mashego Dlamini**, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa.

**Honorable Jennelly Matundu**, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Namibia, and Representative of the In-coming Chair of the SADC Political, Defense and Security Organ.

**Honorable Machana Ronald Shamukuni**, Minister of State, in the President's Office in charge of Administration.

**Dr Eliezer Mbuki Feleshi**, Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania

**Mr. Elias Magosi**, Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

**Ambassador Joseph E. Sokoine**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation;

Dr Faraji Mnyepe, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Defense and National Service

**Mr. Meshack Bandawe**, Representative from the Prime Minister's Office in charge of Policy, Parliamentary Affairs and Coordination.

**Representative** from the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar;

**Representative** from the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security;

**Heads of Defense and Security Forces;**

**Representatives of Regional and International Communities;**

**Representatives from various Ministries and Institutions**

**Members of the Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Allow me to begin by thanking the Almighty God, the Most Merciful, for enabling us to meet here today, for the purpose of the launch of this important - Regional Counter Terrorism Center (RCTC) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Thank you all for taking the time to attend this launch. Your participation demonstrates a sincere commitment to ensure that the challenge of terrorist threats is addressed through a lasting solution.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for affording the United Republic of Tanzania the opportunity to host the Center. This Centre is an important tool in ensuring that Member States strengthen cooperation in the control and fight against terrorist acts, including the exchange of experiences at the African region and international levels; through the collection, analysis, information exchange, training, and the various workshops that will be prepared by the center, including workshops that will be held immediately after the launch of the center.

***Dear Invited Guests,***

With great honour I would like to extend my special thanks to Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania for endorsing the decision of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to host this center, especially at a time when the Southern African region, including Tanzania, is facing terrorist threats. Terrorist threats are an issue that needs to be addressed vigorously, through co-operation without hesitation, and as SADC Members we must tackle this challenge fully. Cooperation between countries is very important as terrorism is not an ordinary war, where the enemy is clearly visible. Some supporters of terrorist groups are part of our society, terrorism is borderless, and perpetrators of terrorist acts can receive support from within and outside the country. The effects of terrorist acts have serious economic, social and security implications for innocent civilians. It is the region's hope that, the establishment of this center will enable SADC to work more efficiently and effectively in the fight against terrorism.

The establishment of the center is part of the implementation of the 2015 SADC Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and its work plan as amended in 2021. The implementation of the strategy and its action plan, goes hand in hand with the implementation of the Regional Early Warning System. This is because the Early Warning System facilitates access to information indicating various threats including terrorism, thus enabling the National Counter Terrorism Centers (NCTCs) in collaboration with the Regional Counter Terrorism Center, to take appropriate action in a timely manner. This partnership must be given the necessary due weight to enable us to win the war on terror by joining efforts.

I urge the Member States that have not yet harmonize their National Counter-Terrorism Strategies to the Regional Strategy to do so, and start implementation, including establishing National Counter-Terrorism Centers. This step will strengthen unity in the fight against terrorism in our community.

***Dear Invited Guests,***

Given that our community is part of the African continent, and the International Community, it is advisable for the Member States to continue implementing the African Union (AU) Agreement and Protocols on Terrorism, and United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UN) on counter-terrorism, including Article 1373, which calls on UN member states to continue cooperating in the implementation of various counter-terrorism Protocols and Declarations.

Reports from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) indicate that, between 2007 - 2016, the African continent lost USD 119 billion in the fight against terrorism. If the Region and the African Continent, take necessary measures against this challenge, this money would be used for development projects and thus improve the living conditions of the people.

**Dear invited guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

As I conclude, I would like to emphasize that, it is our hope that the establishment of this center, will be a catalyst for Member States to improve the use of technology in the fight against terrorism.

Considering that the fight against terrorism requires our concerted efforts, I call on the people of Tanzania and all Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to be at the forefront in reporting as soon as they see or suspect indicators of terrorism, and Member States to continue being alert and vigilant. I would like to wish the executives of this center effective and efficient implementation of their duties, thus fulfilling the objectives of establishing this center.

I would like to thank all those who participated in the process of establishing this Center, including the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for the excellent work done with great care. For those who will be travelling, I wish you a safe journey.

Thank you for your attention

Thank you very much

Merci beaucoup

Muito obrigado