



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO



# **55<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE MEDIATION AND SECURITY COUNCIL AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL.**

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**Welcome Statement**  
**by**  
**DR. Omar Alieu TOURAY**  
**President of ECOWAS Commission**

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**Abuja, 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2025**

- **Your Excellency, Musa Timothy KABBA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chair of Mediation and Security Council,**
- **Excellencies Members of the Council**
- **Heads of ECOWAS institutions, Commissioners**
- **Dear Colleagues, staff of ECOWAS institutions**
- **Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. I warmly welcome you to this 55<sup>th</sup> Ordinary session of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC) at the Ministerial level. On behalf of the Management and Staff of ECOWAS Institutions, I would thank you for your continued commitment to the course of peace, security and stability in our region.
2. Permit me to extend our appreciation to the host, the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the warm reception and facilities put at our disposal towards the successful convening of this meeting. As we continue to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of our Community, our tasks for the next decades are becoming clearer

**Your Excellencies,**

3. Events of the last few weeks have shown the imperative of serious introspection on the future of our democracy and the urgent need to invest in the security of our community.
4. As you would have seen in the memoranda before you, the country-by-country analyses of our member states show different risk levels across our community from high to medium, with an average of high risk for our community, thereby demanding immediate and concerted action. The risk factors are:
  - i. The persistence of **military interventions** (Guinea-Bissau and Republic of Benin just days ago) and **non-compliance with transition norms** in Guinea, as we face a military leader turn into a civilian leader).
  - ii. Growing **erosion of electoral inclusivity** across multiple states.

- iii. Expanding influence of **Terrorists and Armed Groups and criminal networks** threatening regional stability.
  - iv. Increasing geopolitical pressures affecting Member States' diplomacy and cohesion.
5. Elections have become a major trigger of instability in our Community. Despite the best of efforts of our community to establish constitutional convergence principles, and to have a support programme for elections in our region in order to safeguard our democratic credentials and stability, we have continued to witness political practices that violate these principles. In the coming days and months into next year, we will be witnessing elections in Guinea, Republic of Benin, the Gambia, and Cape Verde. We will also be managing the post-events relating to the Coup in Guinea Bissau and the coup attempt in the Republic of Benin. We also have to negotiate with our neighbours, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), particularly the terms of our security cooperation as we continue to see the devastating effect of terrorists' groups along our borders with them.
6. Faced with this situation, Excellencies, it is safe to declare that our community is in a state of emergency. For that, the sessions of the mediation and security council should be organized more regularly beyond the two ordinary sessions for the next one year. We must confront these threats with the attention they deserve. We must pool our resources to confront the threats of terrorism and banditry, which operate without respect for territorial boundaries.

**Your Excellencies,**

7. This Council needs to constantly monitor the political and security situation in our Community, to provide guidance and to enable regional action. To summarise, the issues requiring your constant attention include:
- a. Managing Guinea-Bissau's coup and post-attempted coup in Benin.
  - b. Ensuring credible and peaceful transition in Guinea and enforcing constitutional norms in all the elections coming up for the next one year.
  - c. Addressing candidate exclusion trends region-wide.

- d. Strengthening regional response to Terrorism and destabilizing activities of armed and organized crime groups.
- e. Maintaining unity within ECOWAS amid geopolitical pressures.

**Your Excellencies,**

8. West Africa continues to see grim numbers on the humanitarian front. Behind these numbers are families, women and children who bear the brunt of instability. Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa indicates that as of October 2025, approximately 7.6 million individuals are forcibly displaced across the region, reflecting an increase from 7.4 million recorded in March 2025. Of this total, 6,506,270 are internally displaced persons (IDPs), with Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali accounting for the highest figures. Additionally, there are 1,094,742 refugees and asylum seekers. An analysis of asylum seeker distribution shows that the ten countries hosting the largest populations, in descending order, are Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Senegal, and Gambia. We must therefore take decisions and actions that will reverse this trend.

**Your Excellencies,**

- 9. Let me assure our community citizens that we will not rest on our oars. We will continue to work harder to promote peaceful, stable and stronger region for the overall benefit of Community citizens. Let us all remain committed to preserving regional unity, advancing peace, and upholding the Community’s Constitutional Convergence Principles.
- 10. We are convinced that through your robust engagement of the items on the agenda, we will be having informed and constructive recommendations, for the attention of the Heads of State and Government who are to convene after this meeting.
- 11. To conclude, may I extend warm welcome to the new Ministers of Defence of Nigeria Rtd. General Christopher Musa, and Foreign Affairs of Cabo Verde José Luis Livramento, who are joining today for the first time.
- 12. I thank you for your kind attention.