



STATEMENT BY THE COLLEGE OF HEADS OF STATE OF THE CONFEDERATION OF SAHEL STATES (AES)

Committed to defending the dignity of their people and preserving the integrity of their territory amid imperialist and neo-colonialist ambitions, Their Excellencies Captain Ibrahim TRAORE, President of Faso, Head of State, Army General Assimi GOITA, President of the Transition, Head of State of Mali and Brigadier General Abdourahamane TIANI, President of the National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland, Head of State of Niger, established the Alliance of Sahel States on 16 September 2023.

This decisive new impetus, guided by a shared willingness to achieve genuine sovereignty and initiate a real people's dynamic, was reinforced by the withdrawal of the three countries from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 28 January 2024, and the establishment of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES) on 06 July 2024.

The College of Heads of State of AES Confederation notes that since the adoption of this new strategic approach, guided by legitimate aspirations for freedom and peace, the French imperialist junta, feeling its interests threatened, supported by some Heads of State in the sub-region, is desperately trying to stop the emancipating dynamic launched by AES.

By reiterating the irreversible and immediate nature of the withdrawal of AES countries from ECOWAS, in its statement of 14 December 2024, the College of AES Heads of State rightly considers the decision to extend the withdrawal of Burkina, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS for a further 6 months as yet another attempt by the French junta and its auxiliaries to continue planning and carrying out destabilization actions against AES.

Instead of a concerted management between AES and ECOWAS regarding the technical aspects of the withdrawal with immediate effect, the College of Heads of State was surprised by this unilateral extension decision, which is not binding on AES countries.

The College of Heads of State notes with regret that within ECOWAS, destabilization maneuvers are regularly initiated by a handful of Heads of State who impose their desires and foreign agendas on the rest of the organization.

These actions clearly prove that the security issue which is being successfully addressed by AES countries in the sub-region, and which benefits the whole region, is not a real concern for these actors working for a desperate master.

The College of Heads of State is following with great attention the deceptive maneuvers initiated by the French junta, under the pretext of closing its military bases in some African countries, only to replace them with a less visible mechanism pursuing the same neo-colonial ambitions.

In addition to these activities, there are operations to reorganize and regroup terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel and some border zones: Niger-Nigeria, Niger-Benin, Niger-Burkina, Benin-Burkina. These groups receive various forms of support from foreign states, including financial and logistical resources with a view to destabilizing AES.

In view of the seriousness of these facts, the College of Heads of State of the Confederation :

1. Decides to place the defense and security forces on maximum alert;
2. Decides to make the Confederation zone a single theater of military operations, coexisting with ongoing national military theaters;
3. Calls on the people of AES to redouble their vigilance, to systematically report any suspicious acts to the security forces, and to reject proposals to join terrorist groups.

The College of Heads of State reiterates its commitment to pursuing with determination the struggle of AES People for their true sovereignty and dignity.

Done in Bamako, on 22 December 2024

Army General Assimi GOÏTA

**President of the Transition
Head of State of the Republic of Mali
Chairperson of the Confederation of Sahel States (AES)**