



**Public Lecture: Strategies to Address
Increasing Security Challenges in
Africa in the Context of Violent
Extremism by H.E Mr Abdisaid Muse
Ali**

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About the CMA

The goal of the CMA is to help make mediation efforts throughout Africa more effective. We do so by offering academic and practical courses in mediation, researching new and current best practices, and offering support to organisations and governments involved in mediation processes.

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Lecture: Strategies to Address Increasing Security Challenges in Africa in the Context of Violent Extremism by H.E. Mr. Abdisaid Muse Ali

On the 15th of September, 2022, the Centre for Mediation in Africa (CMA) in partnership with ACCORD organized a Public Lecture with H.E. Mr. Abdisaid Muse Ali, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MOFA), of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The event was held at the Javett Art Centre at the University of Pretoria, and was hosted by CMA's programme manager for mediation practice, Dr. Sokfa John. ACCORD's Senior Political Advisor, Amb. Welile Nhlapo, facilitated it. It was attended by members of the diplomatic community in South Africa, DIRCO, and academics. The lecture comes at a time when there is a growing concern over violent extremism in Africa.



Photo: Dr. Sokfa John addresses the audience

First, Dr. Sokfa reiterated the CMA's uncompromising commitment to peacebuilding, including identifying transformative solutions to violent extremism in Africa, then thanked everyone for coming. He introduced Amb Welile Nhlapo to the podium, who noted that ACCORD found it necessary to take this opportunity to discuss the topic because of the growing trend of violent extremist groups across the continent. He highlighted the long-standing relationship between ACCORD and Somalia, citing that some of the people of the ANC had training in Somalia and also offered diplomatic support to S.A. On this point, Amb. Nhlapo then invited the guest lecturer to the podium.



Photo: Amb Welile Nhlapo addresses the audience

H.E. Mr. Abdisaid Muse Ali started the lecture by highlighting the magnitude to which violent extremism is growing in Africa, with Somalia one of the most affected countries on the continent. He expressed his delight at the opportunity to share his experiences, as Africans must share experiences and lessons learned in our collective efforts to make Africa stronger. The Former Minister reiterated the growth of violent extremist organizations such as the AL Qaeda-linked Al Shabab in the Horn of Africa. These groups continue to expand across borders, which is of great concern to countries like Mozambique, leaving policymakers puzzled on how to address these crises. H.E. Mr. Ali noted the significant reason for the surge include the transnational networking between extremist organizations that generate collective revenues, the composition of foreign mercenaries with whom they share a commonality of languages and training in the same camps, and the ease of movement that they enjoy across borders. He noted that the groups are said to be present in 40 countries.



Photo: H.E. Mr. Abdisaid Muse Ali

Speaking about the solution to this challenge, Mr. Ali noted that Somalia is sharing this problem with fellow Africans and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, which has the platform to reach the issues at the continental level. He highlighted that this is a stride towards solving this security challenge. There are serious actions to be taken, beyond bureaucratic approaches with institutional and budgetary constraints, to curb this movement before they grow out of control. He noted that because the groups are agile and adaptable and cause chaos and instability where ever they go, there is a need to prevent their spread by identifying community grievances that make individuals susceptible to joining such groups. With this in mind, there is need to have reconciled communities with security systems in place to mitigate violent extremism across the continent.



Photo: Audience

To conclude the lecture, the H.E, Mr. Ali, highlighted a few possible solutions to the security challenges posed by violent extremism, starting with understanding insurgency interests in their language – structure, ideological links with mainstream communities, and how they coordinate across the border. Secondly, we must find a way of degrading the group’s core competencies because we do not want the governments to target the whole community. Thirdly, peacebuilding is to combat violent extremism even before it infiltrates societies. He commended the work of the CMA in peacebuilding research and approaches in this regard.

There were questions from the plenary on the nature of transnational extremist organizations, bureaucracy on the part of African leaders and institutions, and clarity on approaches to curbing the security challenges. One message resonated through H.E Mr. Ali’s response “the need for African collective, home-grown approaches to address violent extremism on the continent” The event host, Dr. Sokfa, in his closing remark, commended H.E, Mr. Ali for the enlightening lecture and thanked the visitors, organizers, and esteemed guests for coming.



Photo: Group photo of all participants