
PRESS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AfricaCERT Delivers Fifth Continental Cyber Drill together with the SADC Secretariat in Maseru, Training 310 Delegates.

Four-day capacity building, held back-to-back in collaboration with the SADC Cyber Drill, brought African incident responders together with critical-infrastructure operators and launched the second continental youth hackathon

Accra, Ghana — Jan 9, 2026 — AfricaCERT, the African Forum of Computer Emergency Response Teams, delivered its **fifth cyber drill** at the Avani Maseru Hotel in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, from 4 to 7 November 2025.

AfricaCERT partners with the SADC Secretariat to convene its cyber drill in **collaboration with the SADC Cyber Drill**, now in its third year, which allows a single gathering to serve both regional and continental purposes. Under it, AfricaCERT provides participating teams with capacity building and access to the Cyber Ranges platform (from SILENSEC); Mauritius Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT MU) led the cyber drill; the Benin Computer Emergency Response Team (bjCSIRT) led the AfricaCERT NextGenInCyber capture the flag. The arrangement extends the annual drill's footprint from Southern Africa to the continent as a whole, testing national teams against the strongest incident responders in Africa.

The combined 2025 gathering was convened as the **ICT/OT Cyber Security Training, SADC Cyber Drill & AfricaCERT Meeting**, held in Maseru, Lesotho on **4 and 5 November 2025**, with the SADC Cyber Drill scenarios running on 5 and 6 November and the **AfricaCERT Handshake Meeting** closing the program on 7 November. It drew **310 delegates** and was hosted by the Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation (MICSTI) and the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), which hosts the newly established Lesotho Communications Computer Security Incident Response Team (Ls ComCSIRT).

“Incident response in Africa is only as strong as the trust between the teams doing it,” said Mr. Jean-Robert Hountomey, Executive Director of AfricaCERT. “A drill is a place where that trust gets built, not in a policy document, but in the hours a team spends working a live scenario alongside counterparts from another country. Taking this exercise into the operational technology that runs our mines, our power grids and our water systems is the natural next step.”

Operational technology takes centre stage

The centre piece of AfricaCERT's 2025 contribution was the **two-day hands-on ICT/OT Cyber Security Training**, delivered in Maseru on 4 and 5 November 2025 and built for critical sectors that depend on Programmable

Logic Controllers (PLC) and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems in mining, energy, water, transport and financial infrastructure.

The training was designed to:

- Define OT/ICS cybersecurity, distinguish it from IT security, and address why IT/OT convergence is a necessary challenge rather than an optional one;
- Examine the “3Ds” — decarbonisation, decentralisation and digitalization; and how digitalisation in particular has widened OT/ICS exposure to cyber-attack;
- Assess the real-world impact of attacks on critical infrastructure;
- Equip participants to identify, mitigate and respond to OT-specific threats;
- Bridge the knowledge gap between traditional IT security teams and OT engineering requirements; and
- Promote OT/ICS security controls, incident response plans, the Purdue Model and relevant international standards and frameworks.

Delegates also worked through a track on Security Operations Centre (SOC) incident response and a session on developing cyber simulation exercises.

Drill scenarios, including a first on AI security

Three scenario-based exercises were run, combining Capture the Flag (CTF) challenges with tabletop exercises: *Defending Silent Transfer*, *Facing the Evolving Ransomware Threat*, and *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Security*. The Cyber Ranges platform used for the practical scenarios was supplied by Silensec. AfricaCERT acknowledged **Dr. Kaleem Usmani, Head of CERT-MU (Mauritius)**, who delivered the SOC training and designed the three scenarios.

The program opened on 3 November with an AfricaCERT-led virtual pre-event delivered with the **Messaging, Malware and Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group (M3AAWG)** on Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) incident response for the service provider community — Internet service providers, Internet exchange points and banks. More than **130 participants** attended.

Youth hackathon launched

AfricaCERT used the meeting to execute its **Second Cybersecurity Hackathon for Youth**, a continental initiative aimed at building the next generation of incident responders, alongside the SADC NextGenCyber Capture the Flag competition. Discussions also covered the proposed **Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence**.

Building the continental incident response community

The Handshake Meeting reviewed the status of ratification of the **Malabo Convention** and progress on AfricaCERT and **Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST)** membership across the region, together with the Cyber Threats for 2025 across SADC and Africa report and case studies on forensic laboratories and the establishment of Ls ComCSIRT.

Eleven SADC Member States now operate a national CIRT, and delegations from Angola, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Seychelles reported on their own establishment work.

Dr. George Ah-Thew, SADC Senior Programme Officer for ICT, acknowledged AfricaCERT's role in delivering the ICS/OT training and the youth hackathons, and confirmed that the Secretariat plans a joint event in 2026.

Sessions enabled remote participation from across the continent. Participants included the SADC ICT Regional Implementing Agencies CRASA, SATA and SAPOA, AfricaCERT Members as well as FIRST.

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About AfricaCERT

AfricaCERT is the African Forum of Computer Emergency Response Teams, a community of national and sectoral incident response teams working to strengthen cybersecurity capability, coordination and trust across the African continent. AfricaCERT convenes annual cyber drills, delivers technical training with international partners, and supports emerging teams on the path to operational maturity.

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