

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 551 7700 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
788TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
7 AUGUST 2018

PSC/PR/BR. (DCCLXXXVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 788th meeting, held on 7 August 2018, in Addis Ababa, to the preparations for the Africa Amnesty Month within the context of the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.

Council took note of the opening statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zambia to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Susan Sikaneta, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of August 2018. Council also took note of the presentation made by the Acting Head of the Defence and Security Division of the AU Peace and Security Department, Ms. Einas Mohammed, and the statement made by Dr. Nelson Magbagbeola, the representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);

Council, once again, recalled the AU Vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent; Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration Four, on the building of a peaceful and secure Africa; and the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. Council also recalled the relevant decisions of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in particular, Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 645(XXIX)] on its inaugural Report on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 in which the Assembly declared the month of September each year, until 2020, as “Africa Amnesty Month” for the surrender and collection of illegally acquired and owned weapons/arms, in line with Africa and international best practices, as well as Assembly Decision [Assembly/au/Dec.678 (XXX)] adopted at its 30th Ordinary Session held in January 2018, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to implement activities foreseen under the Africa Amnesty Month, each year, to actively engage in public awareness campaigns, in order to effectively educate the people, with a view to fully involving all segments of the affected communities and mobilize their full cooperation and support to ensure positive outcomes. Council further recalled all its previous decisions and pronouncements on illicit arms flows, in particular, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXXVI)]; Press Statements [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCXVI)]; [PSC/PR/BR. (DCXCIII)]; Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DLXXXIV)], and Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(CDXXX)] adopted at its 776th meeting held on 24 May 2018; 716th meeting held on 4 September 2017; 693rd meeting held on 14 June 2017; 584th meeting held on 29 March 2016’ and 430th meeting held on 24 April 2014, respectively;

Council emphasized that the illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons (SALW), to non-state actors contributes significantly towards exacerbating insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa, thereby undermining social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the effective functioning of state institutions;

Council underscored the importance for Member States to take effective measures to holistically address all root causes of violent conflicts, including the drivers of, the demand for, and sources of illicit supply of arms and ammunition. In the same vein, Council stressed the importance of forging effective synergies between the AU organs, entities and programs dealing with security and development to advance the implementation of the 2006 AU Policy Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) and the AU Border Program. In this respect, Council took note of the establishment of the Inter-departmental task Force on PCRD, established at the level of the Commission. Council further emphasized the need to forge effective synergies with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and welcomed the steps taken to establish a dedicated facility within the Peacebuilding Fund for sustained small arms control measures;

Council, once again, underlined the need for full and effective implementation, by all Member States, of all existing regional and international instruments and regimes, including arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations Security Council. In this context, Council commended all those Member States complying with their commitments pursuant to the relevant international and regional instruments, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Southern African Development Community Protocol on SALW, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of SALW in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on SALW, and the Kinshasa Convention for the Control of SALW, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, and the Arms Trade Treaty. Council urged those Member States, which have not yet done so, to expeditiously follow suit;

Council urged Member States to design context-specific initiatives and create an enabling environment, not only to observe the Africa Amnesty Month in 2018 alone, but also to further strengthen national frameworks and capacities for consistent implementation in the subsequent years. Furthermore, Council encouraged Member States to commemorate the Africa Amnesty Month through a range of activities that can contribute to reducing illicit arms proliferation and violence in 2018 and beyond;

Council emphasized the need for Member States to promote and organize initiatives for the voluntary surrender of illicit weapons in civilian possession on conditions of anonymity and immunity from prosecution, as well as the need for Member States to develop appropriate evaluation frameworks for assessing the effectiveness of their initiatives at varying stages of implementation of Africa Amnesty Month. In this regard, Council reiterated the need for Member

States to put in place information and data gathering procedures and protocols to inform evidence-based interventions and response measures in line with target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

In order to ensure successful implementation/observance of the Africa Amnesty Month, Council underlined the importance of Member States to pursue multi-sectoral approaches that involve not only law enforcement agencies, but other institutions, such as ministries of social affairs, health, livestock and natural resources. However, given the highly technical nature of the exercises involved, Council emphasized the need for the national defence and security agencies to play a pivotal role in the envisaged processes of collection and destruction of illicit weapons, with a view to building confidence among target groups and ensure the safe and secure conduct of all related interventions. In this regard, Council underlined the need for the next meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence Safety and Security (STCDSS), to be held in October 2018, to be seized of this matter;

Council also stressed the importance of convening forums where Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) can share their experiences and best practices, as well as lessons with regard to combating the illicit flow of weapons and, in particular implementation of the Africa Amnesty Month. In the same context, Council also stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation and collaboration between and among national security agencies, including those that are in charge of border security in efforts aimed at combating the proliferation and illicit circulation of weapons. In this respect, Council welcomed the Commission's initiative to develop a compendium of African experiences and best practices, as well as an operational guidance note for the Africa Amnesty Month to inform and support Member States and RECs/RMs efforts;

Council called on the media to play a positive role in publicizing and raising public awareness on the observance of the Africa Amnesty Month. Council equally called on civil society organizations to be involved in public awareness campaigns and civic education in order to ensure successful observance of the Africa Amnesty Month;

Council underlined the need for the Commission to organize a symbolic show of activities in observance of Africa Amnesty Month, in order to send clear signals that Africa is seriously committed to silencing the guns through ridding the continent of illicit arms.

Council underscored the importance of working closely and in cooperation with the United Nations Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee in

reducing the inflow of illicit weapons into Africa and other measures to ensure the realization of a conflict free Africa.

Council commended the RECs/RMs for their sustained efforts to combat illicit flow of weapons in Africa, particularly SALW.

Council also commended the Commission for providing technical support to Member States in the implementation of their national action plans to combat illicit flows of SALW. In this regard, Council requested the Commission and RECs/RMs to further facilitate the exchange of expertise and capacities among Member States, as well as maximize cooperation with international partners to facilitate the matchmaking of assistance needs and resources, in a manner that contributes to building sustainable national capacities and durable results. Council further requested the Commission to redouble its efforts and apply more effective awareness campaigns at the national and regional levels;

Council agreed to consistently raise awareness and promote the Africa Amnesty Month through its various engagements with Member States and during its field missions;

Council, in line with the provision of the Assembly decision on the Africa Amnesty Month, called on Member States to communicate to the AU Commission on their efforts in implementing the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, once a year, after the Africa Amnesty Month and before the AU January Summit, in order to facilitate continuous assessment of its implementation, as well as sharing information and experience;

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.

African Union Commission (AUC)

PAPS Digital Repository

<https://papsrepository.africa-union.org/>

PSC Outcomes

Press Statements

2018-08-07

Press Statement of the 788th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union Held on 7 August 2018, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

<https://papsrepository.africa-union.org/handle/123456789/398>

Downloaded from PAPS Digital Repository, Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS)