

AFRICAN UNION

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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 601ST MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
30 MAY 2016**

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCI)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 601st meeting, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 May 2016, adopted the following decision on the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA):

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the briefing made by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, on the implementation of the RCI-LRA. Council **also takes note** of statements made by the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA);
2. **Notes with satisfaction** the progress made by the RCI-LRA towards the elimination of the LRA, particularly through the operations of the Regional Task Force (RTF), which have degraded the fighting capacity of the LRA. Council **acknowledges** that the LRA has not yet been eliminated and that it still has the potential to rejuvenate itself, particularly, if the current momentum and pressure by the RTF is not sustained. In this regard, Council **reaffirms** its commitment to the elimination of the LRA and the stabilization of areas affected by the activities of this terrorist group;
3. **Also takes note** of the challenges undermining the effectiveness of the RCI-LRA, particularly as they relate to human and financial resources and the prevailing security and political challenges in the region as a whole, which tend to divert regional and international efforts from the terrorist group;
4. **Further takes note**, with deep concern, of the decision of the Government of Uganda to withdraw its contingent of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) from the RTF, more so because this could create a security vacuum, particularly in the Central African Republic (CAR), which the LRA and other negative forces could exploit to escalate their criminal activities in the region. In this regard, Council **appeals** to the Government of Uganda to re-consider its decision, preferably, until the end of May 2017, instead of the end of October 2016. However, Council **welcomes** the offer by the Government of Uganda to train a unit of the CAR Army (FACA) for counter-LRA operations on the understanding that the CAR Government accepts this offer and the training will not have any financial implications to the Government of Uganda;
5. **Commends** the RTF Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) for their commitment to the elimination of the LRA and **pays tribute** to the Ugandan contingent for its lead role in the RTF operations against the LRA;
6. **Underlines the urgent need** for contingency planning for purposes of filling the gap that is likely to be created in the event that the UPDF contingent is withdrawn, as well as to maintain the current momentum in the fight against the LRA. In this regard, Council **urges** the Commission to expeditiously engage with the Government of CAR, the EU, US, UN and Uganda with a view to training, equipping and deploying a robust unit of FACA into the RTF in eastern CAR, on the understanding that, ultimately, the

responsibility to provide security and protection in that part of the country will rest with the FACA;

7. **Underscores the need** for enhanced cooperation and coordination of efforts among the RTF, the US Special Forces, and the UN Peacekeeping Missions on the ground, in order to more effectively contain the cross-border movements of the LRA in the region. In this context, Council **requests** the Commission to avail to Council, a detailed map depicting the sites and sources of the LRA illegally exploited minerals and ivory, including their trafficking routes so as to help Council to prescribe the necessary measures for effectively curbing this illicit transboundary activity of the terrorist group;

8. **Welcomes** the readiness expressed by the Government of Sudan to join the RCI-LRA and **encourages** the Commission to pursue this pledge, in consultation with the current member countries of the RCI-LRA, particularly the Government of South Sudan, which had expressed reservations about the return of the Republic of Sudan to the Initiative;

9. **Endorses** the Conclusions of the 5th ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) of the RCI-LRA. In this respect, Council **calls on** the Commission to specifically take the following actions:

- i. request the Heads of State of the RCI-LRA member states to meet on the margins of the next AU Summit, to be held in July 2016, in Kigali, Rwanda, to review the status of the RCI-LRA,
- ii. pursue further dialogue with the Government of Uganda over the latter's decision to disengage from the RTF,
- iii. follow up the pledge made by the Republic of Sudan to become a full member of the RCI-LRA, in consultation with the member countries of the RCI-LRA, particularly the Republic of South Sudan,
- iv. conduct a Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) to the LRA-affected areas to assess the situation on the ground and provide a report that will facilitate the review of the RTF Concept of Operations (CONOPs), and reconfiguration of the RCI-LRA into a multi-dimensional mission, as well as to help develop an exit strategy for the RTF of the RCI-LRA
- v. conduct a Fact-Finding Mission to Kafia Kingi, Southern Darfur, to verify allegations of the presence of LRA elements including Joseph Kony in the area,
- vi. conduct a Multidimensional Needs Assessment Mission to the CAR to assess future needs of CAR Armed Forces, as well as the stabilisation and reconstruction needs of the LRA-affected areas,
- vii. enhance cooperation and coordination between the RTF and the UN Peacekeeping Missions in the LRA-affected areas in an effort to address the former's inability to pursue

the LRA across borders,

- viii. increase engagement with the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the EU and the USAID to build a synergy on the stabilization and rehabilitation of the LRA-affected areas, and
- ix. intensify efforts aimed at mobilizing additional resources for the RTF and to identify and implement short and long-term early recovery and stabilization interventions in the LRA-affected areas so as to ensure the provision of basic services and infrastructure to the affected communities.

10. **Decides** to extend the mandate of the RCI-LRA for a further twelve (12) months until 22 May 2017, as spelt out in the Communique (PSC/PR/COMM(CCXCIX) of its 299th meeting, held on 22 November 2011;

11. **Expresses appreciation** to the international partners of the AU, notably the UN, EU, and USA for their continued support to the RCI-LRA. In the same context, Council **welcomes** the readiness of the EU to continue providing support to the RCI-LRA, beyond 31 May 2016;

12. **Reiterates** its appeal to the partners, as well as the RCI-LRA member countries and other AU member states to urgently mobilize additional logistical and financial resources to cover the Two Million US Dollars required to sustain the Initiative during the next 12 months until May 2017;

13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.