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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 929TH MEETING 2 JUNE 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXXIX)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 929th meeting held on 2 June 2020, on the cessation of hostilities and humanitarian truce in Africa within the framework of the AU Roadmap for Silencing the guns in the context of COVID- 19,

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month of June 2020, H.E. Ambassador Salah Francis Elhamdi, as well as the presentations made by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui; Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Cessouma Minata Semate; Acting Director of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), Mr. Idriss Mounir Lallali; and the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Cosmas Chanda;

Recalling the Solemn Declaration of the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary, adopted on 25 May 2013, in Addis Ababa, in which the Leaders committed to take the necessary steps, including addressing root causes of conflicts, to silence the guns and wars in Africa by 2020; **also recalling** the AU theme of the year 2020 'Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development', in line with the vision in AU Agenda 2063 and 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Further recalling the call by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, emphasizing the urgency to silence the guns in Africa and for belligerents to stop fighting and ensure cessation of hostilities, as well as the humanitarian obligation for all warring parties to immediately stop fighting in order to facilitate the measures being undertaken by Member States and humanitarian actors to combat and defeat the COVID-19 pandemic; **also recalling** the call by the UN Secretary-General, H.E. Antonio Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire, to ensure that countries affected by violent conflicts, concentrate their efforts on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;

Noting with deep concern that armed groups and terrorist organizations operating in parts of the Continent have not taken heed of the call by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the UN Secretary General for a Global Ceasefire; and **also noting** that they have taken advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to intensify and expand their activities in many parts of the Continent;

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Commends** the efforts being deployed by Member States, with the support of the Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC) and relevant partners in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. **Stresses** that while the COVID-19 pandemic poses a multitude of challenges to the African peace and security landscape, it also provides the Continent with opportunities to harness Africa's efforts towards working decisively to end violent conflicts on the Continent, as well as engaging in innovative ways to Silence the Guns in Africa, including the fight against terrorism and violent extremism;

3. **Reiterates** the call by the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for all warring parties in the Continent and throughout the world to immediately cease all hostilities in order to facilitate efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic; In this context, **commends** all warring parties which have adhered to the ceasefire call and **urges** those which have not yet done so, to immediately do the same, in order to facilitate the measures being deployed to combat and defeat the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute towards advancing peace, governance and development in Africa;
4. **Invites** the United Nations Security Council to undertake concrete actions to uphold the clarion call made by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, for a lasting implementation of ceasefire, as the major part of conflict situations are taking place in Africa;
5. **Reiterates** its determination to use all necessary means to rid Africa off the scourges of terrorism and armed groups and their support networks; To this end, **also reiterates its call** for the urgent blocking of all sources of weapons and financing, including through their links to transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and kidnap-for-ransom, and their recruitment base;
6. **Emphasizes** the importance to further enhance the cooperation and collaboration between Member States, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in combating terrorism and violent extremism;
7. **Condemns, in the strongest terms**, the terrorist attacks on the Continent, particularly the recent attacks in Chad, Nigeria and Somalia, as well as in northern Mozambique, which negatively impacts on the national COVID-19 response efforts;
8. **Expresses particular concern** over the continued fighting in Libya which has undermined efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic and is also aggravating an already precarious socio-economic situation in the country, as well as worsening the plight of migrants and asylum-seekers; In this context, **welcomes** the readiness expressed by the two warring sides, namely, the Libyan National Army (LNA) and the Government of National Accord (GNA), to return to the negotiating table within the framework of 5+5 Joint Military Commission as proposed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for a lasting humanitarian truce in this country;
9. **Welcomes** the outcomes of the Troika Summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation held in 19 May, 2020 in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the security situation in Mozambique, which are aimed at finding a lasting solution to the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism; **affirms its readiness** to support SADC in its efforts to combat terrorism in the region;
10. **Calls upon** Member States to stand by each other in the continental common fight against terrorism and violent extremism and **commends** all those countries that have tirelessly continued to support their neighbors, in the spirit of solidarity and with a view to combating this scourge;
11. **Stresses** the imperative of ensuring protection, without any form of discrimination, of all categories of vulnerable groups such as women and children and to put an end to all forms of violence, including against women and girls, particularly during this challenging COVID-19 situation;
12. **Reiterates** its appeal to Member States to facilitate the continental efforts against COVID-19

pandemic, among others, by opening up their airspaces to facilitate the delivery of material and equipment for the fight against the pandemic and humanitarian support to the population in need, as well as to facilitate protection of healthcare workers and humanitarian actors including Africa CDC and UN Agencies in the field; **appeals** to Member States to also ensure continuity of coordinated programmes that contribute towards preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, saving lives, livelihoods and addressing some of the needs of the refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as irregular migrants;

13. **Welcomes** the successful collaboration between the Africa CDC and the Department of Peace and Security, which resulted in the deployment of 28 frontline responders from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali and Niger through the activation of the AU Strategic Lift Capacity under the framework of the African Standby Force;

14. **Requests** the AU Commission to mobilize specific support for Member States hosting refugees, IDPs and undocumented migrants, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and, in this regard, **underscores the importance** of ensuring that part of the African Union COVID-19 Response Fund, is directed towards the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected countries and to vulnerable sections of society, including refugees, IDPs and undocumented migrants;

15. **Encourages** partners and philanthropists to contribute to the consolidation of the resources of this Fund and **calls upon** Member States, which have not yet done so, to also make their contributions in the spirit of Pan-African solidarity and promotion of African Solutions for problems facing the continent;

16. **Also calls upon** Member States to bring a particular attention to the needs of the vulnerable groups, especially as the first confirmations of cases of COVID-19 among refugees and IDPs' communities have been recorded and, in this context, **commends** the substantial humanitarian assistance provided by Member States to assist the vulnerable groups and **also commends** Algeria for providing medical equipment and food products to the Sahrawi Refugees Camps in Tindouf;

17. **Reaffirms** that, while these solidarity operations bring relief to the vulnerable groups, it is imperative to implement sustainable solutions for lasting peace and stability by addressing the root causes of displacements of refugees and IDPs in the Continent;

18. **Strongly condemns, once again**, all forms of external interference in Africa's peace and security affairs, which undermines national sovereignty and peace efforts in Africa and, in this regard, **underscores the need** to ensure that all external support to peace and security efforts in Africa are well coordinated and directed towards achieving AU's objectives and priorities within the framework of the AU Roadmap for Silencing the Guns in Africa and other relevant AU instruments;

19. **Reiterates its call to** all those countries which have imposed unilateral sanctions and other forms of punitive measures against African countries, in particular South Sudan, Sudan and Zimbabwe, to immediately lift them in order to enable these countries to more effectively fight the COVID-19 pandemic;

20. **Underlines** the need for building strong democratic institutions that respond to the needs of the citizens by promoting and consolidating good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as socio-economic development;

21. **Also underlines** the need for Member States to effectively address root causes of violent

conflicts and disruptive crises, including governance deficits, inter-community tensions, marginalization of sections of society, lack of transparency, unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment;

22. **Emphasizes** that silencing the guns requires a comprehensive, holistic and inclusive approach, and in this regard, **reiterates** AU's call for women and youth participation in peace processes, as well as in post conflict recovery, reconstruction and development efforts;

23. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit this Communique to the UN Secretary General for circulation to the Members of the UN Security Council as a working document;

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