

AFRICAN UNION
<A/N> JUHI

P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 519321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 953RD MEETING
8 OCTOBER 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CM LIII)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 953rd meeting held on 8 October 2020, which was dedicated to a consultation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) pursuant to Article 19 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union:

The Peace and Security Council,

Taking note of the statement made by Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month of October 2020, Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalik and the presentation made by the Chairperson of the ACHPR, Commissioner Dr. Solomon Dersso;

Recalling Article 19 of the PSC Protocol and the Council's previous pronouncements and decisions on its cooperation with the ACHPR, particularly Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLXVI)] adopted at its 866th meeting held on 8 October 2019, in which, among others, the PSC underscored the need for the PSC and the ACHPR to maintain and institutionalize a close working relationship in pursuit of the interdependent objectives of maintaining peace and security and ensuring the protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa;

Further recalling Article 45 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights providing for cooperation with other African and international institutions concerned with the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights; and

Acting under Article 19 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Commends** the existing cooperation between Council and the ACHPR and considers the annual consultative meeting as a framework that enables the Council and the Commission to more effectively implement their respective mandates;
2. **Notes with concern** the gravity of the human rights consequences of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic; and **encourages** AU Member States to continue to take measures to mitigate the human rights impact of the pandemic while taking into account the guidelines outlined in the ACHPR Resolution 449 on Human and Peoples' Rights in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and its social, economic, humanitarian and political impacts;
3. **Stresses** the need for Member States to address human rights violations and abuses that may occur in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as necessary measures for preventing the situation from further deteriorating into serious human rights with dire consequences on social cohesion and political stability of affected countries;
4. **Underscores** that silencing the guns is a pre-requisite for the promotion and protection of all rights in Africa, including the right to development; and in this regard, **emphasizes** that respect to the human rights respective obligations under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protocol to the Rights of Women in Africa constitute is also instrumental to the success of all initiatives

and efforts aimed at effectively silencing the guns in Africa;

5. **Requests** the ACHPR to pay particular attention to the situation of human rights of groups that are subject to additional risks during conflict situations such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, internally displaced persons, and refugees;
6. **Takes note** with interest of the work undertaken by ACHPR concerning the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of armed conflict including the ACHPR Study on 'Addressing Human Rights in Conflict Situations' and its five-pillar approach for upholding human rights in peace and security and **underscores**, in this regard, the need to mainstream human rights standards and principles in all interventions for 'Silencing the Guns' including in relation to prevention, management, stabilization, resolution, to post-conflict reconstruction and development;
7. **Acknowledges** the critical importance of the work the ACHPR in the efforts of the AU Member States towards promoting transitional justice in relation to armed conflict and postconflict situations and, in this regards, **encourages** the ACHPR to provide advisory support to Member States, upon their request, in the implementation of the AU Continental Transitional Justice Policy;
8. **Reiterates its commitment** to continue to strengthen collaboration with the ACHPR, including through informal consultation, information sharing, as well as the annual convening of the consultative meeting;
9. **Reiterates its appeal** to all Member States to cooperate fully with the ACHPR, with a view to enhancing its effectiveness in discharging its mandate, including in conformity with Article 45 (2) and Article 46 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and **urges** all Member States to ensure the implementation of all decisions by the Peace and Security Council, Executive Council and the Assembly in order to enable the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to carry out fully its mandate;
10. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.