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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION REAFFIRMS THE IMPERATIVE FOR DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS IN ORDER TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE THE CURRENT CRISIS IN BURUNDI

The AU ready to deploy human rights observers and military experts

Addis Ababa, 8 July 2015: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, reiterates the AU's deep concern at the prevailing situation in Burundi and the serious risks it poses to peace and security in the country, as well as to regional stability.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the continued efforts of the region to assist in finding a peaceful and consensual solution to the crisis facing Burundi. In this respect, she congratulates the Heads of State of the East African Community (EAC) for holding a 3rd Emergency Summit on Burundi, in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 6 July 2015. She encourages the regional leaders to pursue and intensify their efforts, bearing in mind the urgency and the seriousness of the situation. She looks forward to the steps to be taken by President Yoweri Museveni, in his capacity as Facilitator of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue. In this respect, the Commission will continue to work closely with the EAC and extend all necessary support to the efforts of its Facilitator.

The Chairperson of the Commission emphasizes, once again, that only genuine dialogue among the Burundian stakeholders and consensus based on respect of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi and the Constitution of the country would make it possible to find a lasting solution to the current crisis. She stresses the critical importance of national ownership. The Chairperson of the Commission urges all concerned to eschew violence and resort exclusively to peaceful means in order to overcome the current challenges. She underlines the need for the scrupulous respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Chairperson of the Commission renews the AU's commitment to contribute to the search for a peaceful solution, within the framework of the communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 515th meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 June 2015, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

The Chairperson of the Commission recalls that at its 515th meeting, the PSC agreed on the immediate deployment of human rights observers, as well as on the deployment of AU military experts to verify, in collaboration with the Government and other concerned actors, the process of disarming the militias and other armed groups. She further recalls that the just-concluded EAC Summit called on the Government of Burundi to disarm the Imbonerakure and other armed youth groups allied to political parties, and requested the AU to urgently deploy military observers to oversee the disarmament process. In this respect, the Commission has put in place a Start-up Team of civilian and military experts ready for immediate deployment to Burundi, while efforts are underway to generate additional personnel. The AU looks forward to the urgent confirmation by the Government of Burundi of its readiness to receive the Team without any further delay.