

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXXVI)

AFRICAN UNION
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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
776TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
24 MAY 2018

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COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 776th meeting held on 24 May 2018 received a briefing on Illicit Flows and Financing of Arms in Africa: Sources of Conflicts and Impediments to Silencing the Guns in Africa and adopted the following decision:

Council:

1. **Takes note** of the introductory remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Rwanda to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Hope Tumukunde Gasatura, in her capacity as the PSC Chairperson for the month of May 2018 and by the Acting Director for Peace and Security Department, Dr. Admore Mupoki Kambudzi, on behalf of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Churgui. Council **also takes note** of the briefing by the Acting Head of the Defence and Security Division of the AU Peace and Security Department, Ms. Einas Mohammed, and the presentation done by the Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA), Mr. Theonesté Mutsindashyaka. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by representatives of some of the Member States of the United Nations Security Council;
2. **Recalls** the AU Vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent; Agenda 2063, particularly Strategic Pillar 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 recalls** Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 645(XXIX) on its inaugural Report on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on 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. Council **further recalls** all its previous decisions and pronouncements on illicit arms flows, including Press Statements [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCXVI)]; [PSC/PR/BR. (DCXCIII)] and Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DLXXXIV)], adopted at its 716th meeting held on 4 September 2017; 693rd meeting held on 14 June 2017; and 584th meeting held on 29 March 2016, respectively;
3. **Recalls** the principles of good neighbourhood and peaceful coexistence governing the relations between African States, as enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act, the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council and the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact;
4. **Underscores, once again**, that the illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons (SALW) to non-state actors, including rebel armed groups, terrorists and criminals, contributes significantly to insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa, thereby undermining social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the normal functioning of state institutions;

5. **Underlines the urgent need** 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;
6. **Underlines** the link between illicit financial flows, transnational crime, terrorism, poaching, proliferation of rebel movements and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, notably by armed groups, and illicit proliferation of weapons. In this regard, Council **urges** Member States to redouble their national efforts and further enhance the capacity of their law enforcement agencies, in order to enable them to effectively discharge their mandates and curb the illicit flow of weapons into and within Africa, as well as to enhance their capacity to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons. In the same context, Council **further urges** Member States to redouble their efforts in the fight against corruption and promotion of good governance and high standards of professionalism, particularly, within the defence and security sectors;
7. **Expresses deep concern** over the potential negative effects of the presence of foreign military bases in some volatile parts of the continent to the future security and stability of Africa and underlines the need for external actors to continue to contribute to the promotion of peace and security in the continent;
8. **Underlines** the need for full and effective implementation of existing regional and international instruments and regimes, including arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations Security Council, and **encourages** Member States to re-affirm their commitment by acceding to, ratifying and implementing all existing regional and international instruments to address illicit arms flows. In this respect, Council **commends** all those Member States that are exerting efforts towards the implementation of the international and respective 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 **urges** those Member States, which have not yet done so, to expeditiously follow suit;
9. **Also underscores the importance** of strengthening import and export control measures, enhancing the criminal justice response to arms trafficking, and enhancing regional cooperation in the management of borders, including through intelligence and experience sharing among Member States. In this regard, Council **encourages** closer collaboration between and among regional police authorities and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA). Furthermore, Council **requests** the Commission, through the AU Border Programme, to provide necessary technical assistance to Member States;
10. **Underlines the need** to implement context-specific measures to address illicit arms flows in line with target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, Council encourages

Member States to put in place information and data gathering procedures and protocols to inform evidence-based interventions and response measures;

9. Also underlines the importance for Member States to implement effective arms procurement and management practices, including the destruction of excess, obsolete and illicit arms and ammunition, effective physical security and stockpile management, as well as marking record keeping and tracing. Council **further underlines the importance** of Member States to improve governance and effective oversight of the defence and security sector and implement effective and sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs to prevent relapse into violence.

10. Underscores the importance of mainstreaming women and children in all efforts aimed at combating illicit proliferation of weapons, bearing in mind that they are adversely affected by violent conflicts in the continent;

11. Council commends the Commission for providing capacity building and technical support to Member States and Peace Support Operations so that they can more effectively combat illicit proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons, and **requests** the Commission to redouble its efforts in this regard;

12. Also commends members of the international community for their continued support to the efforts of Member States to implement their commitments, particularly within the framework of the United Nations Programme of Action and the Arms Trade Treaty;

13. Requests the Commission to further enhance the capacity of the Defence and Security Division within the Peace and Security Department, in order for it to enhance its effectiveness in discharging its mandate throughout the continent

14. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.