



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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African Union calls for redoubling of efforts to silence the guns in Africa

The Series of a Virtual Conference, which commenced on 25 May 2020 in commemoration of Africa Day and ended on 8 June 2020, were convened by the Peace and Security Department in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission, to give impetus to the efforts towards campaign on silencing the guns in Africa. The Conference was also aimed at highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges in the implementation of the AU theme of the year: "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". Additionally, the series were designed to accentuate the necessity for partnership among Member States, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), United Nations (UN), civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector in the implementation of AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa (AUMR).

Giving his keynote speech to the Virtual Conference, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, observed that: "the threat posed by COVID-19 has considerably slowed the momentum of the silencing the guns agenda, and our intention is to further accelerate our collective efforts to end conflicts and crises in Africa, while expressing concern that terrorists and armed groups have failed to heed the calls of the AU and UN leadership for a global ceasefire". These factors have severely affected humanitarian access to conflict and crisis areas and limited the reach of support and relief efforts, exacerbating the dual impact of the conflict and the damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic on the most vulnerable, namely refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and migrants, as well as youth, women, children and the elderly.

On her part, Ambassador Cessouma Minata Semate, Commissioner for Political Affairs emphasized that "a sustainable strategy to silence the guns must directly address the structural root causes of violent conflict in Africa, including governance deficits, as well as

promote equitable management of natural resources for the overall benefit of the citizenry”.

The Peace and Security Council (PSC), in the implementation of the theme of the year, has continued with virtual meetings on various conflict and crisis situations and thematic issues in relation to the AU’s efforts in silencing the guns in Africa within the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

While recognizing the existence of robust AU policy frameworks to guide the implementation process of the AUMR, under the leadership of the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission, the participants in the series emphasised the ramifications of illicit inflows of small arms and light weapons into Africa; continued illicit circulation of these weapons within the continent; corruption, illicit financial inflows and governance deficits are among the factors contributing to both traditional and non-traditional threats to states and human security in the continent. Among the practical measures identified by participants of the series to further enhance existing measures for silencing the guns, are the necessity for country level strategies and actions, RECS/RMs appointment of envoys on silencing the guns, in line with the relevant AU Assembly decisions, mobilisation of the private sector for investment and job creation and establishment of an African Economic Forum under the umbrella of Agenda 2063, in order to further enhance the ongoing efforts to silence the guns and create conducive conditions for Africa’s development.

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