



## **AUC Chairperson urges authorities in Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law and protect human rights**

**Addis Abba, Ethiopia: 7 August 2020.** The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Moussa Faki Mahamat is following closely political developments in Zimbabwe as the country mounts concerted efforts in response to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cognisant of the existing harsh socio-economic situation in the country, the Chairperson urges the Zimbabwe authorities to respond to the pandemic ensuring that the national response is premised on human rights as enshrined in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Chairperson is concerned about reports of disproportionate use of force by security forces in enforcing COVID-19 emergency measures. He implores the authorities to exercise restraint in their response to peaceful protests.

The Chairperson further encourages the government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law allowing for freedom of the media, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and the right to information. Violations of these rights are a breach of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

In this regard, the Chairperson welcomes the appointment by South African President and current Chair of the Union, HE Cyril Ramaphosa of two special envoys to Zimbabwe, namely former Cabinet Minister Dr Sydney Mufamadi and former Speaker of Parliament Ms Baleka Mbete, both from South Africa.

The Chairperson reaffirms the African Union's commitment and support to the government and people of Zimbabwe in their endeavour to deepen democracy in the country, in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.