

THE SPEECH OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY AT UNVEILING OF THE AFRICAN UNION MEMORIAL WALL IN HONOUR OF HEROES AND HEROINES FROM AU MEMBER STATES WHO LOST THEIR LIVES FOR THE PEACE AND STABILITY IN AFRICA ON AU PEACE SUPPORT MISSIONS

Protocols...

**The Deputy Chairperson-HE Amb. Kwesi Quartey,
State Minister of MFA of Ethiopia,
Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives Committee,
Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council,
Distinguished Ambassadors, Dear partners,
Representatives of international organizations and agencies,
Civil Society Organizations present, the AU family and members of the Press.**

Your Excellencies, today, in a very special way, I welcome all of you as we remember these gallant heroes and heroines of our continent, who fell, holding that light in the line of sacrifice. Some of our heroes and heroines remain maimed for life. Today, we honour the blood they shed for us. The blood they shed in some cases due to our continent's own weaknesses and others imposed on us from outside.

Our heroes are our stars too. Today we gather here to bear witness to some of the bright stars that lit and continues to light Africa, stars whose lights gave and continue to give guidance and hope to millions in our beloved Africa. To us these stars who remain alive in our minds, were men and women of courage, they gave us the greatest sacrifice possible. They will inspire us for years and years to come.

We give honour to them for holding high the flags of their member states and that of the African Union for the sake of peace, stability and prosperity in our continent. Within our continent alone, we remember with pride, the contributions of these gallant men and women in the wider Peace Support Operations (from Peace building to enforcement) mandated or authorized by our Peace and Security Council. We remember all their contributions where there was no peace to keep, in

most cases under very difficult conditions, insufficient equipment, violent and unpredictable environment, assisting in preventing escalation of crises, facilitating humanitarian assistance, protecting vulnerable civilians, supporting extension of state authority, training of national security forces, in some cases protecting host government critical installations and personnel but because of their sacrifice, at the end, there was peace to celebrate and new lives to build.

From the AU Mission in Comoros, Ethiopia-Eritrea (2000), Liberia (2003), Cote d'Ivoire (2003), The Sudan (2004), DRC (2005), the Comoros (2006), Burundi (2006), Somalia (2007 – to date), Sudan - Darfur (2007 - to date), Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lords' Resistance Army (2011), Mali (2012), Central African Republic (2013), The Multi National Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (2015 – to date), G5 Sahel Joint Force (2017 – to date), the Kingdom of Lesotho (2018 – now closed), we remember all of them.

In front of us on this Memorial wall, is the immortalized names of our heroes and heroines engraved in lasting remembrance, for future generations to know...

It is only befitting that we have the inauguration of this Memorial Wall, on our day, Africa Day, as we mark 56 years of the birth of modern Africa, the formation of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union. We recite the annual commemorations of Africa's independence, freedom and liberation from colonialism. On this day, we celebrate and acknowledge the successes of the African Union from its creation on 25 May 1963, through the fight against colonialism and apartheid, as well as the progress that our continent has made to ensure that it is at peace within itself, developing and establishing itself amongst other continents, contributing to global development and stability.

Once again, I salute the gallantry of our fallen heroes and heroines. They exhibited great acts of bravery and paid the ultimate price through their feats of ingenuity, bravery, and strength. We will eternally remember them! Their sacrifice implores us to unite and to meet the expectations of the African citizens.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, May you join me in officially unveiling this AU Memorial Wall, in honour of our fallen heroes and heroines. Their memories will forever live with us.

I thank you all for coming to honour them.