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**African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)
Mission Headquarters**

P.O Box 20182-00200; Tel (+254-2) 7216710; Fax 7216775, Mogadishu, Somalia
Email: au-amisomhom@africa-union.org

PRESS RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

The African Union (AU) Establishes a Team to Investigate Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Mogadishu-October 17th, 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, has today authorized the deployment of an Investigation Team to look into allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) leveled against personnel of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in a report titled "The Power these Men Have Over Us – Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia" which was issued in Nairobi, Kenya on 8 September, 2014.

The Investigation Team of four, including two women, are from Ghana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and have the requisite training, qualifications, expertise and experience at national, regional and international levels which they would bring to bear in the discharge of this very important responsibility.

The Investigation Team is to conduct investigations into the specific allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse made against AMISOM personnel, particularly the Ugandan and Burundian Contingents as well as AMISOM civilian personnel with a view to:

- Establishing the facts with respect to these allegations so that a determination can be made on whether the allegations of SEA occurred or not; and,
- Establishing, if they occurred, the duration that such actions have been taking place and the actions taken by the AMISOM Leadership that either contributed to, or deterred the alleged actions from occurring.

The Investigation Team will conduct its assignment in an independent, professional and transparent manner. The Investigation Team will be responsive to the needs of alleged victims and potential witnesses as well as to the wishes of all concerned to find out the truth about these allegations.

The Chairperson requests the full cooperation of all relevant parties to these investigations, including unfettered access to all persons and sites that will facilitate the conduct of these investigations.

The Chairperson would like to reiterate that the AU's commitment and determination to reinforce its efforts in combating sexual exploitation and abuse in all its ramifications, especially its impact on victims, survivors and their families. In this regard therefore, The Chairperson has also constituted an

Assessment Team consisting of Academics and Women Activists with special expertise on victim of sexual violence, protection and law enforcement and peace and security that will concurrently conduct a comprehensive assessment to determine the extent, nature, patterns and trends of SEA in AMISOM, if at all, so as to inform and guide its policy and response mechanisms not only for AMISOM but for all its Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

The Investigation and Assessment Teams are expected to complete their assignments by 30 November, 2014 after which the teams will submit their reports to The Chairperson. The findings and recommendations will be made public, using the appropriate AU channels and with due regards to victim protection, the rights of alleged perpetrators as well as the operational imperatives of AMISOM.

*For more information, please Contact; Eloi Yao and Colonel Ali Aden Houmed, Spokespersons,
Cell phone: (Somalia) +252 699 525 773 OR +252 699 758 567; (Nairobi) +254 702 155 126; Email:
amisommediacentre@gmail.com*
