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UN

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE PEACE PROCESS AND THE SITUATION IN BANGUI

Bangui, 11 April 2018: We, representatives of the African Union and the United Nations, decided to undertake a joint visit to the Central African Republic (CAR) to express our solidarity and full support to the Central African people and for the peace process in the Central African Republic. We also share a message of complete unity and common resolve of the African Union and the United Nations.

We are pleased in this regard that our visit coincides with the first meeting in Bangui of the International Support Group for CAR since the country's return to constitutional order. During our visit, we will have the opportunity to talk with the Central African authorities, and have also held talks with President Touadéra.

Having arrived yesterday, we are also concerned about persistent tensions in the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui. The operations conducted by the Government and MINUSCA on 8 April were aimed at putting an end to the activities of criminal elements that endanger the lives of peaceful citizens, in a neighbourhood that is also the economic hub of Bangui.

In these difficult times, we wish to express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and we deplore the many wounded, to whom we wish a speedy recovery.

Above all, we wish to emphasize that this operation to restore order and State authority has the sole purpose to protect the people who seek our protection against the criminal elements who oppress them. We want to make it clear that we are determined to act to protect the entire population, across the country.

We strongly deplore and condemn the attempts to instrumentalise this operation, as well as the attacks perpetrated against peacekeepers, about 20 of whom have been wounded, and one who succumbed to his wounds.

We would like to remind you that any attack against peacekeepers is a war crime. Their authors and those who support them will certainly have to answer for their crimes in court.

We also wish to express that an offer of a peaceful settlement had previously been made to the targeted groups, who rejected it.

Finally, we wish to emphasize that, in close coordination with the Government of the Central African Republic, we are ready to use all means available to the international community to create conditions for the restoration of peace in CAR. Among these means, dialogue will be our first action followed by, if necessary, the use of force.

Our joint presence here, in collaboration with the Central African Government, is intended to reaffirm our unambiguous commitment to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, which, as the United Nations Security Council has stated, represents the only way forward to exit from crisis.

To the people of Bangui, we also call for calm. We ask them not to be victim to rumours and manipulation. Your authorities are working hard with MINUSCA to restore public order and ensure the protection of all civilian populations, without distinction.

Signed,

Mr Smaïl Chergui

Peace and Security Commissioner of the African Union

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations