



## PRESS RELEASE

### AU–ICRC Roundtable on Operationalization of the Obligation to Ensure Respect for International Humanitarian Law

**Addis Ababa, 12 November 2020:** The African Union (AU) Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) jointly organized the fourth annual Roundtable on the Operationalization of the obligation to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), on 12 November 2020, held virtually through Zoom Online Platform. The Roundtable was aimed at enabling discussions on lessons and good practices for effective investigations of allegations of violations of IHL, International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and conduct and discipline standards in AU and United Nations (UN) Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

In his opening remarks, the Director for Peace and Security, Dr. Admore Kambudzi, highlighted the central role of Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) in current efforts aimed at enhancing capacities for investigations of IHL and IHRL violations in AU PSOs – in line with AU’s zero tolerance stance on these issues. The Head of the ICRC Delegation to the African Union, Mr Bruce Mokaya Orina, reiterated that “The obligation to respect and ensure respect for IHL, also requires States to do everything in their power to make sure that other actors involved in the armed conflict respect IHL”. The Roundtable included representatives from the AU and UN headquarters and field missions, namely: African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram Terrorist Group, UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); selected African Troop Contributing Countries (including Burundi, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda) and the European Union (EU).

The Roundtable enabled a rich exchange of views on the investigations processes of the AU, UN, coalitions of states and T/PCCs as well as perspectives of the ICRC on key elements that will guarantee comprehensive and effective investigations processes. Increasing in-mission court-martials, facilitating administrative investigations as well as ensuring effective complaints and whistle-blowers mechanisms were also reiterated as key requirements for the enhancement of effective investigations processes. It was agreed that these key elements will help enhance current AU and T/PCC efforts and guidance for a comprehensive case management process for PSOs. The importance of the AU-ICRC partnership and joint work in upholding the obligations under Common Article I of the Geneva Convention was reiterated.

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