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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
832ND MEETING
14 MARCH 2019
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXXXII)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 832nd meeting held on 14 March 2019, received a briefing from the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) on the Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Its Impact on Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi, in her capacity as the PSC Chairperson for the month of March 2019. Council **also takes note** of the introductory statement made by Lt. General Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir, Executive Secretary of RECSA, as well as of the presentations made by Resource persons from RECSA. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the European Union and the United Nations (UN);
2. **Recalls** the AU Vision of an integrated, stable, peaceful and prosperous continent; Agenda 2063, particularly Strategic Pillar Four, on the building of a peaceful and secure Africa; the UN Security Council Resolution 2457 (2019) on Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, which was adopted on 27 February 2019; UN Programme of Action (UNPoA) to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects, as well as the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. Council **also recalls, once again**, Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 645(XXIX) on its inaugural Report on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 in which the Assembly declared the month of September each year, until 2020, as “Africa Amnesty Month” for the surrender and collection of illegally acquired and owned weapons/arms, in line with African and international best practices. Council **further recalls** all its previous decisions and pronouncements on illicit arms flows, particularly Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXXVI)] adopted at its 776th meeting held on 24 May 2018;
3. **Re-affirms** that illicit flow of arms, particularly small arms and light weapons (SALW) to non-state actors, including rebel and armed groups, terrorists and criminals, contributes significantly to fuelling insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa, thereby undermining social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the normal functioning of state institutions;
4. **Underlines** the link between illicit proliferation of weapons and corruption, illicit financial flows, transnational organized crime, terrorism, poaching and illegal exploitation of natural resources. In this context, Council **encourages** Member States to redouble their efforts aimed at promoting good governance, transparency, accountability and high level of professionalism across all sections of society, including governance of security and defence institutions;

5. **Stresses** the primary responsibility of Member States in combating illicit circulation of arms and ensuring that weapons and ammunition do not fall into wrong hands. In this context, Council **underlines the importance** for Member States to ensure effective and protected management of national systems and facilities for the stockpiles of weapons and ammunitions and also to further enhance accountability, in order to avert diversion and prevent security risks. Council **also stresses the need** to include in peace agreements modalities for the management of weapons in order to ensure effective demobilization, disarmament and re-integration (DDR) programmes, in particular, effective weapons collection in Member States emerging from violent conflicts. Furthermore, Council **stresses the importance** for Member States to invest more in building the institutional capacities of all national security, law and order enforcement agencies, in order for them to more effectively discharge their respective mandates;

6. **Reiterates the need** for Member States to take effective and holistic measures to address all fundamental root causes of violent conflicts, including the drivers of, the demand for, and sources of illicit supply of arms and ammunition to non-state actors, in particular armed groups, which actions constitute a threat to peace, security and territorial integrity of States;

7. **Also reiterates** the need for full and effective implementation of existing regional and international instruments and regimes, including arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations Security Council, and **encourages** Member States to re-affirm their commitment by acceding to, ratifying and implementing all regional and international instruments to address illicit arms flows;

8. **Encourages** the Commission to further strengthen partnerships and synergies with Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), in order to further enhance implementation of Silencing the Guns (STG) Plan of Action. Council **also encourages** the Commission to work in close collaboration with the RECs/RMs in popularizing the Africa Amnesty Month, with a view to assist African citizens in efforts to surrender illegally detained or acquired arms, bearing in mind the need to fight against impunity;

9. **Requests** the Commission to establish a platform that will serve as a forum for sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices, as well as cross border cooperation on effective management and control of small arms and light weapons across the continent with the support of the RECs/RMs. Council **also requests** the Commission to establish a credible mechanism for measuring and reporting on progress of implementation of the STG Plan of Action, working closely with RECs, RMs, and regional bodies with a small arms mandate, especially those with technical expertise such as RECSA and ICGLR, as well as with Member States;

10. **Further requests** the Commission to consider organizing a forum for the AU to constructively engage with weapons manufacturers;

11. **Commends, once again**, all Member States that are exerting efforts towards the implementation of the international and respective regional instruments, including the UN-PoA, the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region, the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of SALW in the great lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, the Economic Community of West African States Convention on SALW, Their Ammunition, and Other related materials, and the Kinshasa Convention for the Control of SALW, their Ammunition and all Parts and Components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, the UN Firearms Protocol, and the Arms Trade Treaty. In this context, Council, once again, **urges** those Member States, which have not yet done so, to expeditiously follow suit;

12. **Notes with concern**, the porous nature of borders in the Continent. In this regard, Council **reiterates the importance** of further strengthening import and export control measures, enhancing the criminal justice response to arms trafficking, and enhancing regional cooperation in the management of borders, including through intelligence and experience sharing among Member States. In this context, Council, once again, **encourages** closer collaboration between and among regional police chiefs' organizations and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA). In the same context, Council **requests** the Commission, through the AU Border Programme, to provide necessary technical assistance to Member States;

13. **Looks forward** to receiving, as soon as possible, for consideration by Council, the Report on Mapping Illicit Arms Flows in Africa, developed jointly by the Commission and the Small Arms Survey, and validated by RECs, and international experts in late 2018;

14. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.