



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION REJECTS AS NULL AND VOID THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MILITARY OF THE "DISMISSAL" OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE TRANSITION IN BURKINA FASO

The AU stresses that the abduction and detention of the leaders of the Transition constitute a terrorist act

Addis Ababa, 17 September 2015: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, continues to follow with deep concern the situation in Burkina Faso following the abduction yesterday, in Ouagadougou, of the President of Faso, Michel Kafando, Prime Minister Yacouba Isaac Zida and some members of his Government, by elements of the *Régiment de sécurité présidentielle (RSP)*, as well as today's announcement of the appointment of "new authorities".

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's strong condemnation of the unjustifiable abduction and the continued detention of the leaders of the Transition, which constitute an act of terrorism in all respects, as well as the unacceptable attempt to undermine completely the Transition ushered in Burkina Faso in November 2014. She stresses that these acts are all the more reprehensible as they come less than a month before the presidential and legislative elections, which would have marked the conclusion of the Transition. She welcomes the unanimous condemnation by the international community of these acts, which constitute a serious threat to peace, stability and security in Burkina Faso, the region and the rest of the continent. She calls on all the AU Member States and the international community as a whole to ensure that this attempt to undermine the Transition is defeated. The AU considers the announcement by the military of the "dismissal" of President Michel Kafando and the attempt of substituting him with "new authorities" as null and void.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the leaders of the Transition and for the reinstatement in their functions. She stresses that the elements of the RSP involved in this situation shall be held accountable for their actions and for any attack on the physical integrity of the detained personalities.

The Chairperson of the Commission, recalling the relevant AU instruments, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, will seize the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) of this matter tomorrow 18 September 2015, in order to enable the latter to take all the necessary measures called by this situation.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the imperative for the defense and security forces to operate under the control of the political authorities. She stresses that the repeated destabilization attempts by elements of the RSP since the beginning of the Transition highlight the need for security sector reform in Burkina Faso, as part of the efforts to deepen democracy and strengthen the rule of law in this country.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's commitment, working in concert with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations and the international community as a whole, within the framework of the International Support and Follow-up Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF), to continue to provide full support to the current transitional authorities and to the people of Burkina Faso, in order to ensure the completion of the Transition process initiated in their country within the agreed timeframe.