



PRESS RELEASE

AUPSC Commemorates the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month in Lomé, Togo

Ensuring a peaceful and secure continent and advancing the AU's Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030 initiative

Lomé, Togo, 1 September 2022: In its efforts to continue the “Silencing the Guns” initiatives throughout the year and beyond, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), will commemorate the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month (AAM), for the surrender and collection of illicit weapons, from 5 to 6 September 2022, in Lomé, Togo.

The commemoration will be led by H.E. Ambassador Amma A. Twum-Amoah, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to the African Union and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of September 2022, with the participation of the High officials of the Government of Togo, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) and other relevant stakeholders in Togo including the civil society organizations, the media, the private sector and faith-based organizations.

The commemoration aims to encourage civilians to voluntarily surrender illicit weapons in their possession on condition of anonymity and immunity from prosecution. Moreover, it also aims to promote Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, as well as to encourage the participation of African civil society – including the youth and women, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector, and the media to promote the surrender of illicit firearms by civilians during the AAM, among others.

The commemoration will include a symbolic destruction of collected illicit weapons by the Government of Togo in Lomé.

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Notes to the Editor

About Africa Amnesty Month

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) has been commemorating Africa Amnesty Month during the month of September each year since the adoption of Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.645(XXIX) by the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in July 2017, in Addis Ababa, in which it declared the month of September of each year, until 2020, as Africa Amnesty Month (AAM) for the surrender and collection of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The duration was extended for up to 2030 by the 14th Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 6 December 2020. The implementation of AAM is within the context of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2030.

To date, the PSC has held five (5) meetings in the commemoration of the Africa Amnesty Month. During its 1029th meeting held on 8 September 2021, the PSC adopted Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.1029(2021)] emphasizing the need to commemorate the AAM on the ground in a selected Member State, to ensure that the objectives of this initiative are popularized and to encourage broad participation.

The continued commemoration of the Africa Amnesty Month by Member States, RECs/RMs and partners strengthens confidence among State security institutions as custodians of weapons and citizens. It also enables the development of programs and policy frameworks that facilitate surrender of weapons to the relevant government authorities in the month of September, without fear of prosecution.

Since 2018, the AU Commission has continued to support Member States to implement various activities in commemoration of the AAM, including in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). The strong commitment of Member States has been demonstrated by the active participation of some Heads of State and high-level government officials during the September activities. This year the following countries received financial and technical support, through the AU-UN partnership, in the implementation of the AAM, namely Liberia, Tanzania and Togo. The Commission will continue to support such initiatives, including by mobilizing the requisite technical and financial resources. The Commission is also undertaking programs that provide technical support to Member States in the field of Physical Security and Stockpile Management of arms and their associated ammunition, in line with international standards.