LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA AMNESTY MONTH 2021

1 September 2021

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE,
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS,
PEACE AND SECURITY
Fellow citizens of the African Union Member States, it is my honor to launch the African Amnesty Month for this year, 2021.

Let me start by congratulating you all for your commitment and continued efforts towards realizing peace, security and stability in Africa. Indeed, no country can ensure peace and security without the cooperation of its citizens.

In the quest for peace and development, our Heads of State and Government decided to recommit to collecting illicit firearms by extending the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month up to 2030.

Countries commit, under this decision, that they will encourage all civilians who own illegal arms to hand them to their designated national authorities without fear of disclosure of their identity, arrest, or prosecution.

Even then, a survey by the African Union Commission, in 2019, indicates that about forty (40) Million Smalls Arms and Light Weapons are still in illegal possession of civilians in Africa. This widespread availability of arms among civilian population continues to have direct adverse effects on human and State security.
Indeed, illicit firearms are enablers of armed violence, and fuel all forms of armed conflicts, including insurgencies, armed robberies, and inter-communal violence. I, therefore take this moment to appeal to all the citizens of the African Union Member States who are in possession of illicit firearms to do the right thing and hand them over to national authorities. This will immensely contribute to Silencing the Guns in Africa, and to the realization of a peaceful and secure Africa.

This September is yet another golden opportunity for anyone who owns an illegal gun to surrender it to their national authorities. Please just do it!

Let us join hands and help spread the word in your community. To the media, I am especially appealing to you specifically, to at least for the next one month, sing this song of the need for the surrendering of firearms in the hands of civilians. Let the message go far and wide. We all have a role to play as peace-loving citizens.

Act now for a more peaceful and prosperous Africa.

LET’S DO THIS TOGETHER, LET US SILENCE THE GUNS in AFRICA!

I Thank you.