AU Peace and Security Commissioner concludes visit to Burundi

Addis Ababa, 18 June 2014 – The African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, concluded a working visit to the Republic of Burundi on 16 June 2014, during which he discussed the political and security situation in the country with President Pierre Nkurunziza. The Commissioner underlined the need for greater political inclusivity ahead of next year’s elections, and welcomed the responsible manner in which the Burundian authorities continue to address the issues recently raised by the international community.

President Nkurunziza assured the Commissioner that Burundi is peaceful and his Government will do everything it can to preserve the spirit and achievements of the Arusha Agreement. He further stated that he is the President of all Burundians, including all Youth, and will not allow any individual or group to intimidate the population or the state.

Commissioner Chergui thanked President Nkurunziza and noted that Burundi has made significant progress since the signing of the Arusha Agreement which ended Burundi’s civil war more than a decade ago. He underlined the necessity for all Burundians to continue striving together to preserve peace, unity and national cohesion, and assured them of the AU’s full support as they prepare for elections in 2015, including the scheduled deployment to Burundi of an AU Elections Observation Mission.

The Commissioner seized the opportunity to reiterate the AU’s appreciation to the Government and People of Burundi for the brilliant performance of Burundian peacekeepers in Somalia and the Central African Republic (CAR). “Africa owes Burundi and other AMISOM and MISCA Troop and Police Contributing Countries a big debt of gratitude for positively responding to the Pan-African solidarity call to help our Brothers and Sisters in distress in Somalia and the CAR,” he stated.

Upon his return to Addis Ababa, the Commissioner informally briefed the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on his visit to Burundi, during the Council’s 442nd meeting on 17 June 2014.

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