PRESS RELEASE

Workshop on the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reunification and Reintegration of the Returnees of the LRA

Addis Ababa, 9 March 2016 – The Commission of the African Union (AU), in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), held a two-day workshop on 3-4 March 2016, on the "Review of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (D2R3) Procedures and Capacity for the Returnees of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)". The workshop was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, pursuant to the recommendation of the bi-annual LRA Focal Points meeting held in Entebbe, Uganda, on 8 - 9 September 2015.

The workshop brought together civil society representatives from the four LRA-affected countries, mainly the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Uganda, as well as from the US (Delegation to the AU, State Department and Department of Defence), the UN (UNOCA, UNOAU, UNICEF, UNDP, as well as UN Peacekeeping Mission in DRC, CAR, and South Sudan). Representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, Invisible Children, Save the Children and LRA-affected countries also participated in the workshop.

The Workshop mapped out the various actors involved in the processes of sensitization, extraction, family tracing, reunification, and reintegration of the LRA returnees. It also identified the pertinent challenges being encountered in these processes, as well as the kind of resources required to improve them in a manner that could induce more defections of LRA commanders, fighters and abductedees hitherto in the bush.

Opening the workshop, the Head of the AU Defence and Security Division, Dr. Tarek A. Sharif, underlined the importance of ensuring the safe return, repatriation and reintegration of ex-combatants as an essential component of efforts to restore and safeguard inter-communal relationships, including cross-border ties that have been damaged by activities of the LRA. Meanwhile, during the closing of the workshop, Mr. Sivuyile Bam, Head of AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), said the workshop would help generate D2R3 capacity within PSOD.

The Commission applauds the efforts of all the stakeholders in complementing the kinetic military operations of the AU Regional Task Force against the LRA and urged for sustained efforts until the LRA is eliminated.

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