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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 520TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA 29 JUNE 2015

PSC/PR/BR.(DXX)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 520th meeting held on 29 June 2015, was briefed by the Commission on the consolidation of democracy, elections and constitutional amendments and their impact on peace, security and stability in Africa.

Council commended those Member States which had successfully conducted their national elections both in 2014 and during the first half of 2015. Council urged these countries to maintain and consolidate their democratic gains, and for those that are yet to hold elections to ensure that they conduct them in accordance with practices which engender free, fair and transparent elections.

Council noted that a number of Member States still have governance and democratic challenges and deficiencies, which continue to be at the center of the root causes of most conflict and crisis situations in the continent.

Council expressed deep concern at the evolution of the situation in Burundi, particularly the decision by the Burundian authorities to hold legislative and local elections on 29 June 2015, in total disregard of the call by the AU and the East African Community (EAC) to postpone the elections. Council also expressed concern over the acute humanitarian situation which has been caused by the current crisis. In this regard, Council recalled the communique adopted by the EAC Extraordinary Summit held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 31 May 2015, and communique PSC/PR/COMM.2(DXV) adopted at its 515th meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 June 2015, which provide an appropriate framework for a lasting solution to the current crisis. Council further recalled the Statement issued, on 26 June 2015, by the Joint International Facilitation Team on Burundi, composed of the EAC, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the AU and the United Nations (UN), and the communique of the Chairperson of the Commission of 28 June 2015.

Council reiterated its determination to take all necessary measures against all Burundian actors whose actions perpetuate violence and hinder the search for a political solution to the crisis.

Council also noted, with deep concern, the deterioration of the situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho, particularly the assassination of the former Lesotho Defence Forces Commander, Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao. In this respect, Council commended the efforts being deployed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to urgently find a political solution to the current challenges facing that country. Council stressed the need for continued engagement with the Lesotho stakeholders by both the SADC and the AU. In this regard, Council called on the political actors to bring to justice those responsible for the assassination of Lieutenant General Mahao. Council further implored political actors in Lesotho to resolve their political differences through dialogue, and stressed the need for comprehensively addressing the underlying structural political and security challenges, including undertaking constitutional and security sector reforms.

Furthermore, Council called on all Member States which have not yet done so to sign, ratify and domesticate all existing AU instruments relating to democracy, elections and governance.

Council commended the Commission for its ongoing efforts aimed at promoting greater

synergy, cooperation and collaboration between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and called for the intensification of these efforts.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.