

AFRICAN UNION

UNIAO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321

Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 982ND MEETING 25 FEBRUARY 2021 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXXII)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 982nd meeting held on 25 February 2021, on the consideration of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections in Africa held during the period from July to December 2020 and those held, as well as those to be held during the first quarter of 2021.

The Peace and Security Council.

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to the AU and PSC Chairperson for February 2021, H.E. Ambassador Amma Adomaa Twum-Amoah, and the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections in Africa held during the period from July to December 2020 and those held, as well as those to be held during the first quarter of 2021 as presented by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma;

Also taking note of the statements made by the representatives of the following AU Member States which organized elections during the period from July to December 2020, namely, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Tanzania and Uganda; as well the statements made by the representatives of the following AU Member States, which are yet to organize their elections during the first quarter of 2021, namely, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire and Somalia;

Mindful of the AU determination to promote, deepen and consolidate democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law throughout the African Continent, in line with the Preamble and Articles 3 and 4 of the AU Constitutive Act, while bearing in mind the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;

Acknowledging the significant contribution of credible, free and fair elections to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and political stability, as well as in promoting, deepening and consolidating democracy in Member States, within the overall context of achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa;

Recalling all its previous decisions on elections in Africa, particularly, Communiqués [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXVI)], adopted at its 976th meeting held on 29 January 2021 and [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXXXV)] adopted at its 935th meeting held on 9 July 2020;

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections in Africa held during the period from July to December 2020 and those held, as well as those to be held, during the first quarter of 2021;
2. **Congratulates** all Member States which have successfully conducted their elections during the period under consideration, albeit in particularly challenging circumstances caused by the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and **encourages** those Member States that will be organizing their elections during the first quarter of 2021 to take all necessary measures and create conducive conditions for the successful organization of transparent and credible elections;
3. **Commends** all Member States, which fully funded their elections, in particular, Tanzania and

Uganda, and **encourages** others to emulate this good example with a view to preventing external interferences in elections and promoting African solutions to African problems;

4. **Also commends** the AU Commission for continuing to provide technical capacity building support to the national election management bodies (EMBs) of Member States, including the deployment of election observer missions, with a view to ensuring the successful organization of credible democratic elections throughout the African Continent and in this regard, **reiterates** the urgent need to avail necessary financial resources for the election related activities of the AU Commission, with a view to ensuring that the Commission continues to more effectively support Member States, in the same context, **expresses** gratitude to all relevant stakeholders including civil society organizations and international partners who provided positive contributions in support to AU Member States;

5. **Appeals** to all political parties and other relevant political stakeholders in Member States to continue promoting the culture of peace and democracy and to always place the supreme interests of their countries above all else, refrain from violence, embrace dialogue and to make full use of available legal channels to peacefully address all elections impasses and other related disputes;

6. **Reiterates** that the decision on whether or not to proceed with the organization of elections during this COVID-19 context and any other public health emergency situations remains a sovereign prerogative and inalienable right of individual Member States. In this regard, once again, **emphasizes the importance** for the Member States to always ensure that such critical decisions are arrived at through consultative, transparent and consensual processes, involving all relevant stakeholders, with a view to preserving and promoting peace and stability in their countries;

7. **Also reiterates the critical importance** for Member States which decide to proceed with the organization of elections, in line with their national elections calendars, to create the necessary conducive conditions to ensure safety and security of the population against COVID-19 pandemic, in line with the AU Guidelines on Elections in Africa in the Context of COVID-19 pandemic and other Public Health Emergencies, as well as the safeguard protocols issued by World Health Organization (WHO);

8. **Encourages** Member States to expedite the adoption, and thereafter the implementation of the AU Guidelines on Elections in Africa in the Context of COVID-19 pandemic and other Public Health Emergencies; **also encourages** all national elections management bodies (EMBs) to urgently familiarize themselves with the AU Guidelines and to develop appropriate policies to guide the organization of credible elections in their countries, particularly in the context of public health emergencies; **also emphasizes** the need for all relevant government institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, the media, election observers and the rest of the international community to also familiarize themselves with, and to popularize, these Guidelines;

9. **Further encourages** Member States to create conducive conditions that will encourage more women, the youth and persons with disabilities to actively take part in public life and political processes, particularly elections, among others by strictly ensuring quota systems and reducing the fees for enlisting election candidature, in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (The Banjul Charter), the Protocol to African Charter on Human and People's on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), as well as the Africa Youth Charter;

10. **Urges** the media, both print and electronic, to always contribute positively towards promoting the integrity and credibility of elections and maintenance of peace and stability in Member States, among others, by educating and factually informing the public, as well as to refrain from inflammatory reporting;
11. **Encourages** all Member States, that have not yet done so, to consider to sign, ratify and domesticate the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
12. **Expresses gratitude** to the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, for her hard work during her tenure, in the promotion of peace, security, democracy, human rights and good governance in the Continent;
13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.