

SOLEMN LAUNCHING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 10th MEETING

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE SOLEMN LAUNCHING OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), meeting in its tenth Session, at the Level of Heads of State and Government, on 25 May 2004, adopted the following communiqué:

A. DECISION ON THE CRISIS IN THE DARFUR REGION OF THE SUDAN:

The Peace and Security Council,

1. Reiterates its concern over the prevailing situation in Darfur, particularly the continuing humanitarian crisis and the reported human rights violations committed in that region since the beginning of the crisis;
2. Urges the Parties to fully and scrupulously implement the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement signed on 8 April 2004, in N'djamena, Chad, between the Government of Sudan (GoS), on the one hand, the Sudan Liberation Movement / Army (SLM/A), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), on the other;
3. Stresses the imperative need for the parties to strictly respect international humanitarian law and for GoS to ensure protection of civilian population. In this respect, Council recalls the statement by the Government of Sudan (GoS) to

control and disarm militia and non-regular forces and urges the GoS to vigorously pursue this task;

4. Welcomes the announcement by the GoS of its decision to issue to the staff of the humanitarian agencies and organizations visas within 48 hours upon application, to suspend, for 3 months, the requirements for travel permits to Darfur, to facilitate access to the equipment required for humanitarian action in Darfur, as well as to facilitate the return of IDPs and refugees. Council further welcomes the decision of the President of the Republic of the Sudan appointing a High Level Independent Committee to investigate the reported human rights violations in Darfour ;

5. Welcomes the Agreement signed in N'djamena, on 25 April 2004, between the GoS, in the one hand, the SLM and the JEM, on the other, reaffirming their will to convene a general conference of all representatives of Darfur to discuss the political, economic and social situation in the Darfur with the view to finding a global and definitive solution between the parties to the conflict;

6. Authorizes the Chairperson of the Commission to take all steps deemed necessary to ensure an effective monitoring of the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement, in particular through the deployment of an AU Observer Mission, with the required civilian component and, if necessary the protection element, to support the work of the Ceasefire Commission (CFC), based on the outcome of the AU-led Reconnaissance Mission to the Sudan and Chad (from 7 to 16 May 2004). Council calls on the parties to extend full cooperation to the CFC and the AU Observers and to ensure their free movement throughout Darfur;

7. Appeals to the United Nations and other AU Partners to provide support for the deployment of the Ceasefire Commission and AU observer mission;

8. Requests the AU Commission on Refugees to dispatch a

mission to Darfur to assess the humanitarian situation and make recommendations on how best the AU could contribute to the alleviation of the plight of the internally displaced persons and other affected people in Darfur. Council also encourages the AU Commission on Human and Peoples Rights to dispatch a mission to Darfur to investigate reports on human rights violations in Darfur;

9. Further requests the Chairperson of the Commission to take the necessary steps to investigate the allegations by the Sudan of interference by a neighboring country in its internal affairs, which could undermine the efforts towards achieving peace in the country.

B. DECISION ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

The Peace and Security Council:

1. Expresses concern that the conflict in Somalia has protracted for too long, with untold humanitarian consequences and that faction leaders, gun-wielding groups and other warlords that have held the Somali people at ransom, aggravating the impact of the collapse of the State of Somalia;

2. Reiterates its attachment to the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia, as well as its determination to do everything possible to facilitate the successful conclusion of the IGAD-led efforts, thus putting an end to the conflict and instability in Somalia, and to assist the Somali people rebuild their country, especially the political, economic, and social institutions devastated as a result of years of conflict and instability;

3. Appeals to the Somali parties, including faction leaders, to refrain from any hostilities and put the interest of their country above all other concerns, and to cooperate with the IGAD Facilitation Committee in order to speed up the peace process and the National Reconciliation Conference;

4. Underscores the importance to respect the deadline of 31 July 2004, for the conclusion of the National Reconciliation Conference. In this respect, Council stresses its determination to mobilize the international community for targeted sanctions to be applied against all those faction leaders to be found deliberately undermining the process;

5. Commends the efforts of Kenya and the other IGAD countries. In this respect, Council welcomes the outcome of the 5th and 6th Ministerial Meetings of the IGAD Facilitation Committee and the unity of purpose pledged by the IGAD countries, to help restore lasting peace and stability in Somalia. Council calls upon AU Member States and all other members of the international community to rally behind the IGAD efforts and to refrain from any action likely to jeopardize those efforts. Council also expressed its appreciation to the members of the IGAD Partners' Forum for supporting and facilitating the Reconciliation Conference;

6. Appeals to the international community, including AU partners and particularly the European Union, to continue to provide badly needed financial support for the peace process and the National Reconciliation Conference;

7. Pays tribute to UN Agencies and NGOs for providing assistance to the war-affected and drought-stricken communities in Somalia;

8. Expresses its grave concern over the continued proliferation of arms in Somalia and the repeated violations of the UN Security Council arms embargo on that country. Council stresses the need for the scrupulous compliance with the UN arms embargo on Somalia and encourages the Commission to pursue the efforts undertaken in that respect;

9. Requests the Commission to speed up preparations for the deployment, in Somalia, at the appropriate time, of an AU Military Observer Mission, that will support the DDR process,

monitor the cessation of hostilities and carry out other related activities.

C. DECISION ON THE SITUATION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

1. Expresses its grave concern over the deadlock in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the continued deterioration of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire;

2. Deeply regrets the current impasse which continues to paralyze the operations of the Government ;

3. Notes that unilateral action by any side can only worsen the situation and further delay the peace process;

4. Expresses its grave concern over the exactions, killings and human rights violations perpetrated since the beginning of the crisis, supports any initiative aimed at investigating these violations and putting an end to impunity. In this regard, Council takes note of the Presidential Statement of the Security Council and endorses the initiative of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights to set up a Commission to investigate the human rights violations perpetrated since to beginning of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. Council reiterates its request to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights to carry out an investigation into human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire;

5. Urges the Ivorian Parties to demonstrate political will and commit themselves to the full and unconditional implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement;

6. Appeals to the Ivorian Parties to show restraint and create the necessary conditions conducive to the return of all the stakeholders to the National Reconciliation Government. In this regard, the composition, as well as the integrity of the Government of National Reconciliation, including a consensus Prime Minister, should be maintained ;

7. Notes the laudable role of ECOWAS in its efforts to bring

peace to Côte d'Ivoire and urges it to remain seized with the matter. In this respect, Council mandates ECOWAS to take necessary action to ensure full restoration of operations of state in Côte d'Ivoire immediately and to report progress to the Assembly of the Union at its 3rd Ordinary Session, in July 2004;

8. Encourages the President of the African Union Commission to pursue his efforts towards facilitating an effective re-launch of the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and, more particularly, to contribute to the promotion of dialogue and understanding among the leaders of the countries of the region.