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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
808TH MEETING
19 NOVEMBER 2018
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCVIII)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 808th meeting, held on 19 November 2018, adopted the following decision on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Council,

1. **Takes note** of the briefings made by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, as well as by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and Head of the AU Liaison Office in the DRC, Ambassador Abdou Abarry on the situation in the DRC. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Barnabé Kikaya Karubi, Diplomatic Advisor of the President, as well as that of Gabon, in its capacity as the Chairperson of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the representative of the United Nations Office to the AU;
2. **Recalls** its previous decisions and positions on the situation in the DRC, as contained in, particularly, the communiqué PSC/PR/COMM (DCCXII) and the press statement PSC/PR/BR (DCCLVIII), adopted on 23 August 2017 and 14 March 2018, respectively;
3. **Reaffirms** the imperative need to organise elections in the DRC on 23 December 2018, in accordance with the electoral calendar announced on 5 November 2017, within the framework of the implementation of the Political Agreement of 31 December 2016. Council **also reaffirms** its commitment to the continued support in the implementation of the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 24 February 2013;
4. **Expresses its deep concern over** the persistence of armed violence, perpetrated by the negative forces in Eastern DRC. Council **strongly condemns** the attack carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Beni, North Kivu Province, on 11 November 2018, resulting in the loss of 7 peacekeepers from the UN Mission for Stabilisation in the DRC (MONUSCO), including six from Malawi and one from Tanzania, as well as injuries to several elements of the DRC Armed Forces (FARDC). Council **conveys its deepest condolences** to the United Nations, the Governments of Malawi and Tanzania and **wishes** a speedy recovery to the wounded;
5. **Expresses further its deep concern about** the threat that armed groups pose to the efforts deployed by the DRC, with the support of the international community, to contain the Ebola epidemic. Council **expresses its solidarity and compassion** with the Congolese people in the face of the distress caused by the Ebola epidemic in the Beni region, where armed groups are launching deadly attacks against the population, thereby hampering the operations to control the spread of the disease. Council **commends** the efforts of the Congolese military and health institutions to stem the epidemic and put an end to attacks by armed groups, with the support of MONUSCO, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Centre for Disease Control (Africa CDC) of the AU. In this regard, Council **expresses its support** to the envisaged regional approach and **urges** the political, military and health authorities of the DRC, Uganda and Rwanda to enhance their cooperation to contain the epidemic. Council **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to make the necessary arrangements, in consultation with MONUSCO and WHO, to give substance to the above-mentioned regional strategy;
6. **Calls on** DRC and Angola to closely cooperate with a view to ensure a return of Congolese citizens, in line with International Humanitarian Law;
7. **Welcomes** the decision of President Joseph Kabila to comply with the Constitution of his country, by abstaining from being a candidate for the forthcoming presidential election. Council **commends** the Government of the DRC for its commitment to self-finance the organisation of the

elections, as well as for all the measures taken to meet the challenges related to the electoral process and the implementation of the Political Agreement of 31 December 2016, in conformity with the Constitution of the DRC;

8. **Further commends** the stakeholders in the DRC for their efforts to implement the Agreement of 31 December 2016, and **calls upon** them to show a sense of compromise, facing many challenges ahead. In this respect, Council **urges** the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to pursue its campaign of explanation and consultation with all the stakeholders, particularly with regard to the use of the voting machine, and **stresses the importance** of voters training campaign, with a view to build confidence in the electoral process and to establish the conditions for a massive participation of the people in the various ballots, scheduled for 23 December 2018;

9. **Welcomes** the sustained efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the DRC and **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission, in conformity with the decision of the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, to take the necessary measures to coordinate the multifaceted support that AU Member States could provide to the electoral process. In this regard, Council **encourages** the Congolese authorities to identify the support required, if necessary, in order to facilitate the coordinated implementation of such support between the AU, African Regional Organisations and MONUSCO;

10. **Welcomes** the measures taken by the AU Commission to support the DRC in this electoral process. In this respect, Council **also welcome** the visit undertaken from 8 to 10 November 2018, in Kinshasa, by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, during which he interacted with all Congolese stakeholders, including the President of the Republic, H.E Joseph Kabila. Council **requests** the Commission, in response to the invitation of the Congolese authorities, to take all necessary measures to dispatch an electoral observer mission, commensurate with the issues at stake in these elections. In this perspective, Council **calls for** coordination between the African Union Observer Mission and those deployed by the Regional Economic Communities with a view to ensuring better support for the electoral process;

11. **Calls upon** the Congolese authorities to continue and intensify the establishment of confidence-building measures to facilitate open political activities throughout the country, fair access to the public media, for all presidential candidates and other measures to give substance to the provisions for the protection and security of the candidates of the presidential election.

12. **Expresses its gratitude** to MONUSCO and the bilateral and multilateral partners of the DRC for their multifaceted support for the stabilisation of the Congo and recalling Paragraph 8 of the Communiqué of its 712th meeting, **calls for** the lifting of all individual sanctions imposed against the Congolese personalities, in order to establish an environment conducive to the organisation of free, fair, credible and peaceful elections in the DRC;

13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.