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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
860<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
18 JULY 2019  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLX)

**COMMUNIQUE**

## COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 860<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 18 July 2019, on illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons,

The Peace and Security Council,

**Recalling** articles 7.1(n) and 14.3(c) of its Protocol and its previous communiqués and press statements on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, particularly communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXXXII)] of 832<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 14 March 2019; press statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCXCIII)] of 793<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 4 September 2018; press statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCLXXXVIII)] of 788<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 7 August 2018; communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXXVI)] of 776<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 24 May 2018; press statement [ PSC/PR/BR. (DCCXVI)] of 716<sup>th</sup> held on 4 September 2017; press statement [(PSC/PR/DLXXXIV)] of 584<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 29 March 2016; and press statement [PSC/PR/BR.(CDXXX)] of 430<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 24 April 2014;

**Noting** the opening statement made by H.E. Mr Sebade Toba, Permanent Representative of the Togolese Republic to the AU, in his capacity as President of the Council for the month of July 2019; and the statement made by the Director for Peace and Security, Dr. Admore Kambudzi; **Also noting** the presentations made by the Acting Head of the AU Defence and Security Division, Ms. Einas Mohammed, and the representatives of the Small Arms Survey, Mr. Francis Wairagu and Mr. Matthias Nowak, regarding the joint mapping study conducted by the Commission and the Small Arms Survey entitled “*Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa*”; **Further noting** the statements made by the Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA).

**Expressing grave concern** over the fact that the illicit transfer, circulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons sustains and exacerbates conflicts and contribute to a series of humanitarian law and human rights law violations, including forced displacements; **Further expressing deep concern** over the fact that the illicit transfer, circulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to fuel and exacerbate international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drugs trafficking, money-laundering, illicit financial transactions, illegal exploitation of natural resources and wildlife trafficking;

**Reaffirming** that the elimination of the threat posed by the illicit transfer, circulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons is a critical component of realizing the goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and Agenda 2063, and **determining** to continue to take practical steps in this respect;

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

1. **Welcomes** the findings of the joint mapping study conducted by the Commission and the Small Arms Survey, which has shed light on the main types of illicit arms flows affecting the Continent and has also shown that illicit arms flows vary according to national, regional and sub-regional circumstances; In this respect, Council **endorses** the recommendations of the joint mapping study, and **encourages** Member States, the Commission, Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) with a small arms mandate, to further enhance their respective capacities towards undertaking integrated and comprehensive measures to address this scourge in line with the regional and international instruments;
2. **Emphasizes** the responsibility of States producing and exporting small arms and light weapons to ensure regulated export and brokering controls, and to observe import control mechanisms that may be adopted at the sub regional level; Council **also encourages** exporting and importing States to share information regarding illicit brokers, and to afford one another the widest possible measure of assistance in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings in relation to illicit arms transfers, including within the framework of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT);
3. **Underscores the need** for Member States to enact appropriate regulations and administrative procedures to ensure effective control over the production, export, import, transit or retransfers of small arms and light weapons, as well as related brokering activities, in order to prevent illegal manufacture of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons, or their diversion to unauthorized actors;
4. **Notes** with concern the growing circulation of readily convertible imitation handguns and craft-produced weapons in Africa and **requests** the Commission, in consultation with Member States, RECs/RMs with a small arms mandate, to assess the scale of these phenomena with a view to submitting recommendations on effective responses and regulatory measures;
5. **Recognizes** that the destabilizing accumulation and diversion of small arms and light weapons from national stockpiles is a significant factor contributing to illicit flows and, in this respect, **urges** Member States to enhance stockpile security, accountability and management in line with the regional and international voluntary guidelines, including the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG); In the same context, Council **underlines** the urgent need for timely measures to secure vulnerable stockpiles against capture by unauthorized non-state actors, particularly in conflict situations, and **requests** the Commission, in consultation with regional bodies and specialized institutions, to develop potential measures and good practices in this regard;

6. **Stresses the urgency** for Member States to eliminate the supply of small arms and light weapons to unauthorized non-states actors, including terrorist, armed and criminal groups, and **urges** them to intensify and accelerate the exchange of information regarding traffickers and trafficking routes, and to further enhance coordination of efforts at the sub-regional and international levels, including through regional police chiefs cooperation organizations, the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) and the African centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT); Council **further urges** Member States to redouble their efforts and enhance their cooperation in tracing illicit small arms and light weapons in line with the International Tracing Instrument and through the INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS);

7. **Acknowledges** that the porosity of African border is exploited by criminal and terrorist groups to transfer small arms and light weapons across countries, and in this regard, **underlines** the need for adaptable, cost-effective and innovative approaches to address this gap, including through enhanced border communities engagement and policing, ratification and implementation of the Niamey Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, and streamlining border security into the AU Border Program;

8. **Expresses deep concern over** the continued circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons in post-conflict situations, which undermines peacebuilding and increases the risks for relapse into the cycle of violence, and **stresses** the need for effective weapons collection and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that provide sustainable opportunities to former combatants and takes into account the security needs of the wider populations; In this context, Council **emphasizes** the need for improved measures to regulate non-state actor possession of small arms and light weapons, in order to prevent the diversion or misuse of weapons and **encourages** Member States to implement initiatives that are in line with the Africa Amnesty Month;

9. **Recognizes** the significant contribution of Peace Support Operations in countering illicit arms flows in mission areas through seizing and confiscating illicit arms, and **underlines** the need to improve such practices in line with the provisional AU Policy on the Management of Recovered Small Arms and Light Weapons; Council also **acknowledges** the challenging environments in which AU Peace Support Operations are deployed and that contingent owned small arms and light weapons may become vulnerable to theft and capture, and thereby **requests** the Commission to provide the necessary assistance to enhance security, management and accountability measures;

10. **Acknowledges** that arms embargoes mandated by the UN Security Council are an important tool contributing to countering the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, thereby mitigating the severity of conflicts and creating conditions conducive to their peaceful resolution; In this respect, Council **unequivocally condemns** all violations of arms embargoes currently in effect in Africa, particularly as they result in supplies to terrorist groups and criminal

networks, undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, and threaten regional security and stability; **underlines** that Member States subject to arms embargoes should be adequately assisted in implementing the necessary measures required to achieve well defined targets and objectives; and **affirms** its intention to increase collaboration with the UN Security Council to address implementation gaps, including within the framework of the annual joint consultative meeting between the two councils;

11. **Calls upon** Member States, the Commission, RECs/RMs with a small arms mandate to take concrete measures to facilitate women's full and meaningful participation in all policymaking, planning and implementation processes to counter and eradicate the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and to mitigate the risk of women from becoming active players in the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons;

12. **Emphasizes** the importance of gathering data on the extent and impact of illicit flows at the national level and sub-regional levels, taking into account their impact on women, men, girls and boys, and in a manner that informs effective results-based approaches that lend themselves to be monitored and measured;

13. **Reiterates** that national reporting provisions contained in regional and international instruments are key transparency measures that contribute significantly to confidence-building and security among states, and **calls upon** Member States to fully comply with these provisions, as well as to report annually on their armaments to the UN Register of Conventional Arms;

14. **Emphasizes** its intention to continue to take due regard of related issues when considering conflict situations, and **requests** the Commission to include in its reports and briefings to the Council on country-specific situations, more comprehensive and detailed information and recommendations relating to the impact of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, including on the protection of civilians;

15. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.