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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

989TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

12 APRIL 2021

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLXXXIX)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 989th meeting (open session) held on 12 April 2021 on the theme “Prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa”:

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the AU and Interim PSC Chairperson for April 2021, H.E Ambassador Mohammed Idriss Farah and the statement by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye; **also noting** the presentations by the Representative of the Republic of Rwanda, Researcher and Scholar on Genocide, Mr. Tom Ndahiro; as well as the representatives of the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU) ;

Further noting the statements made by the representatives of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (France, Russia, United Kingdom and United States of America) and written submissions by various participants, including the AU Member States, AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), partners and international organizations;

Recalling its previous decisions, particularly its Communiqué [(PSC/PR/COMM.(DCLXXVIII))] adopted at its 678th meeting held on 11 April 2017, in which Council decided to convene, annually in April, a PSC open session on the prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa;

Also recalling the provisions and principles of article 4 (h, j and o) of the AU Constitutive Act and Aspirations 4 and 5 of Agenda 2063; and **reaffirming** the respect for human life’s sanctity as enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948;

Further recalling the AU’s twenty-seventh commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda held on 7 April 2021 under the theme “Remember-Unite-Renew”, which paid tribute to the victims and survivors of hate, hate crimes and genocide;

Cognizant that Africa is a diverse Continent rich in cultural identity and value systems added to a complex context of historical, social, economic and political interactions, which requires concerted efforts to build tolerance and mutual respect to inculcate a culture of living together as neighbours peacefully anchored on Ubuntu values;

Reaffirming the AU’s strong commitment to diversity, good neighbourliness, equality, inclusion and solidarity in Africa.

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

1. **Strongly condemns** the increasing trend of hate speech, identity-based conflicts, violent intercommunal clashes, ethnic divisions, xenophobic utterances, racism, amongst others, constituting solid drivers of the ideology of hate potentially leading to hate crimes and genocide; and **expresses concern** that extremist ideology fosters a fertile ground for the spread of hate speeches and hate crimes with a potential risk of culminating in genocide;
2. **Also strongly condemns** attempts to deny, justify or trivialize genocide against the Tutsi as this threatens perpetuation and manifestations of hate speech and crimes, and in this regard **underscores** the need for the development of a shared definition of what constitutes hate speech and hate crimes to enable Member States to enact the necessary legislation to combat the phenomena;
3. **Stresses** the importance of awareness campaigns through various media, including informal and formal education, and in this regard **encourages** the Member States to promote the teaching of peace, reconciliation, tolerance, justice and democratic values in their respective education systems with a view to contribute building a generation which embrace peace; **urges** the Member States to formulate inclusive policies reflecting each Member State's cultural diversity to free the citizenry of prejudices, and most importantly, contribute to national reconciliation and social cohesion by creating a peaceful culture, emphasizing positive values, promoting the universal values of justice and tolerance;
4. **Further stresses** the importance of implementing the decision of the AU Assembly by expediting the construction of the AU Human Rights Memorial dedicated to victims of human rights violations in Africa, such as the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, apartheid in South Africa, Ethiopian Red Terror, colonialism and the Slave Trade; and **encourages** Member States to renew their commitment to realize objectives of the project in the efforts to create awareness and prevent any recurrence of similar crimes;
5. **Highlights** the need to use the media, including print and social media platforms, to foster national engagements for fighting incitement to hatred and violence, and in this aspect **stresses** the essence to adopt fair principles of journalism, guidelines, and ethical values to discourage biased coverage and promotion of propaganda and accordingly improve information and reporting quality;
6. **Encourages** the Member States to enhance meaningful inclusion of youth and women in national programs and decision-making platforms for them to be agents of change and pursuers of peace, unity and harmony within the society;
7. **Calls on** Member States, in close collaboration with the RECs/RMs, to double their efforts on prevention strategies that address root causes of conflicts; in this regard, **underlines** the invaluable role of civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders in preventing and mitigating the risks of hate crimes, the incitement of and targeted violence against individuals or groups, raising victims' voices, and calling for accountability and reparations;
8. **Underlines** the importance of instituting national unity and reconciliation initiatives to promote healing and unity, especially in societies and to de-escalate tensions timely; **emphasizes** national ownership of reconciliatory efforts which aim to build inclusive and resilient communities thereby preventing the entrenchment of exclusion, hate crimes, and genocide

ideology; in this regard, **commends** Rwanda for the creation of a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in March 1999, which has sought to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans in the aftermath of the genocide against the Tutsi, and **encourages** Member States to emulate programs such as “Ndi Umunyarwanda” (I am Rwandan), which seek to promote unity and reconciliation further and to build social cohesion amongst the people of Rwanda;

9. **Urges** the Member States who are yet to sign, ratify or accede to relevant international legal instruments, especially the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948, to do so and, consider enacting relevant national legislation to meet their obligations under that Convention;

10. **Commends** the Member States who have already enacted instruments and mechanisms for addressing and combating impunity, ensuring that perpetrators of hate crimes, atrocities and genocide, and their accomplices are investigated and prosecuted them as per the existing regional, continental and international legal provisions;

11. **Welcomes** efforts by those Member States that are investigating and prosecuting individuals involved in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and **calls upon** other Member States that have not yet done so, to investigate, arrest, prosecute or extradite the genocide fugitives currently residing in their territories; In the same context, **condemns** denial and trivializing facts about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda;

12. **Emphasizes** the need for cooperation amongst the Member States, RECs/RMs and the international community to facilitate the timely prevention and punishment of genocide and hate crimes, mainly where indictments and international arrest warrants have been issued for different suspects worldwide; in this aspect, **welcomes** Rwanda’s commitment to ensure justice for the victims through various mechanisms, including commissions of inquiries, prosecutions, extraditions and judgements; and **underscores** the importance of all affected Member States to cooperate with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals to ensure that indicted fugitives accused of genocide are arrested, extradited and prosecuted;

13. **Calls upon partners and the international** community to redouble their commitment in extending the support towards national capacities and instruments for the protection of human rights and fighting hate speech and its manifestations to avoid escalation into genocide;

14. **Underscores** the need to reinvigorate the early warning mechanism as a preventative tool to enable an early response before hate speech and crimes degenerate into violent conflicts and genocide; in this regard, **requests** the AU Commission through its Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) to expeditiously put in place mechanisms for regular monitoring of conflict situations and alerting the PSC and the broader AU Member States of potential escalation of hate crimes into genocide, **also requests** the AU Commission, in close collaboration with RECs/RMs, to prepare a comprehensive analysis of the relevant developments in the Continent and brief the Council twice a year;

15. **Decides** to include an analysis on indicators of hate crime and risk factors for them to escalate to genocide in the Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa;

16. **Requests** the AU Commission to institutionalize the commemoration of the anniversary of the genocide against Tutsi, including using AU Liaison Offices in different parts of the Continent, to create awareness amongst local communities, as one essential element towards prevention of the ideology of hate speech, hate crimes and genocide in the Continent;

17. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint an AU Special Envoy on the Prevention of Hate Crimes and the Crime of Genocide to drive all the pertinent agendas indicated above and identify risk indicators of the ideology of hate, genocide, and hate crimes, and ensure timely interventions on the Continent, following due consideration of the terms of reference of this position by the PSC;

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