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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
761<sup>ST</sup> MEETING

5 APRIL 2018  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**INFORMATION NOTE**  
**COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TOWARDS THE PREVENTION OF THE**  
**IDEOLOGY OF HATE, GENOCIDE AND HATE CRIMES**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union at its meeting held on 11 April 2017 decided to convene, annually in April, a PSC session on hate crimes and fighting genocide ideology in Africa. The session recalled the horror of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and reiterated its commitment to prevent the recurrence of similar mass atrocities, hate crimes comprehensive approach towards the prevention of the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa is required.

**II. KEY INTERNATIONAL AND AFRICAN INSTRUMENTS**

2. Hate and genocide crimes are covered by a number of international and African Union instruments in order to combat and prevent them. Key among these instruments are the following:

- the Charter of the United Nations (UN);
- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);
- the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) adopted in 1966;
- International Convention on Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (1969);
- African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1981);
- AU Constitutive Act;
- AU Post – Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy Framework (2006);
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 2150 (2014);
- UN General Assembly 72/550 of 26 January 2018 entitled “*International day of reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda*” designating 7 April as the International day of reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

3. Although the above instruments are in place, hate crimes and genocide ideology continue to exist on the African Continent. If unchecked, this could lead to violent conflicts and worse still to other Genocidal wars on the continent in the future.

**III. PERPETUATING HATE CRIMES AND GENOCIDE**

4. Hate and genocide crimes do not happen abruptly. They are systematically planned and involve perpetrators who execute these heinous crimes using all the available machinery. Planners of hate crimes and genocide organize campaigns and define target group of the society for systematic extermination.

5. In Rwanda, the genocide against the Tutsi for instance was preceded and nurtured by widespread hate ideology and propaganda. The genocide ideology was propagated when political leaders using state machinery started branding a section of their own population – the Tutsi – as the ‘other’, ‘enemy of the State’, ‘cockroaches’ who were to be exterminated and destroyed. Language such as “*cleansing from the face of Rwanda the Tutsi*” was commonly used prior to and during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This culminated in the killing of over one million innocent lives in a period of 100 days. Thus discrimination, marginalization, tribalism and manipulation of ethnicity create conditions for hate crimes and ideologies of genocide to thrive.

6. Hate speech precedes and accompanies ethnic conflicts, and particularly genocidal violence. Without such incitement to hatred and the exacerbation of ethnic, or racist tendencies, no genocide would be possible. In today's Africa, the ideology of Extremisms among religious factions is fostering a new ground for hate speeches and crimes and if unchecked could lead to genocidal wars across the continent. Enforcement of one religious doctrine or the other as **state religion** in African Member States that upon independence agreed to remain secular States due to the varied ethnic and religious compositions of their societies is planting the seed for genocidal wars on the continent. African must rise above religious extremism and focus on economic development. After all, religion is a personal matter and **each citizen** and **not a State** will appear before God to answer for their deeds.

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENTING THE IDEOLOGY OF HATE, GENOCIDE AND HATE CRIMES**

7. **Use of the correct terminology to avoid genocide denial:** deniers of Genocide often propagate the ideology of genocide by denying its existence, which risks its recurrence. This has been the case for the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda where deniers- revisionists continue to deny its occurrence arguing among others that what happened in Rwanda in 1994 was a civil war or extrajudicial killings. In addition, the revisionist agenda attempts to turn victims into perpetrators through a theory of a double genocide. Thus this group of people prefers to use ambiguous terms such as: *The Rwandan Genocide or Genocide in Rwanda*. It is important that the correct terminology be used to avoid any form of denial of this Genocide.

8. The Peace and Security Council therefore at its 678th meeting held on 11 April 2017, underlined the importance of use of clear analysis and proper terminology in order to avoid falling into the problem of denials.

9. In a similar vein, the United Nation (UN) General Assembly on 26 January 2018 adopted a Decision 72/550 entitled *"International day of reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda"*. The Decision by the UN General Assembly changed the earlier terminology used by the UN from *"International day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda"* to *"International day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda"*.

10. Similarly, four years ago, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2150 (2014) Adopted on 16th April 2014, used the terminology: *1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda* and strongly condemned any denial of this genocide.

11. **Unity and Reconciliation initiatives:** For hate crimes and genocide ideology to be prevented. It is critical that deliberate reconciliation programs be developed in societies divided on ethnic, racial, religious or any other basis. In Rwanda, a national unity and reconciliation commission was created in March 1999 to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans in the aftermath of the genocide against Tutsi, which has fundamentally positively impacted on the Rwandan society. Programs such as *"Ndi Umunyarwanda" (I am Rwandan)* were developed to further promote unity, reconciliation and to build social cohesion.

12. **Prosecution of perpetrators of Hate and Genocide crimes:** Perpetrators of hate and genocide crimes should not be left unpunished. Impunity for perpetrators of such crimes should be unacceptable by any country. Member states and the international community should therefore ensure they investigate, arrest, prosecute or extradite genocide fugitives currently residing in their territories including leaders of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR).

13. **Early warning mechanism:** the AU's early warning mechanism should be strengthening to detect early warning signs of situations, which could easily degenerate into violent conflicts and genocide if not addressed in a swift and effective manner.

14. **Reinforcement of Laws that prohibit and criminalize hate speech:** Hate speech should be prohibited and criminalized in member states. At the international level, it is addressed in two primary international instruments; the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) adopted in 1969, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) adopted in 1966. Member states that are not signatories of these instruments should sign and domesticate them.

15. Article 4(a) of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) states that, "signatories shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred. Public authorities and public institutions are prohibited from promoting or inciting racial discrimination". Similarly, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) obliges governments to condemn and eliminate racial discrimination by both public institutions and officials and private individuals, guaranteeing to everyone without distinction as to race, color, or national origin, "the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm."

16. At the national level, it is important that member states establish necessary legal frameworks or strengthen existing ones to ensure that laws that deal with hate speech, hate crimes, discrimination, ethnic division and genocide ideology are put in place. Some member states have already enacted such laws. It is crucial that those that have not yet enacted them do so.

17. **Awareness campaigns through formal and informal education:** the education systems should be inclusive in their policies and reflect the ethnic, racial and cultural diversity of each member state. The education policies by member states should aim at producing citizens free from ethnic, regional, national and religious prejudices and who are committed to protect human rights. Further, the education sector should contribute to national reconciliation by creating a culture of peace, emphasizing positive values, promoting the universal values of justice and tolerance among others. The teaching of peace, reconciliation, tolerance, justice, and democratic values should be promoted.

18. **Use of media:** the media can actively engage in fighting incitement to hatred and violence by adopting such journalism principles, guidelines and ethical values that improve the quality of information and reporting, to avoid bias, prejudice and manipulation. In countries where media has played a negative role in spreading hate speech, media reform could be an important element in preventing and responding to hate speech. Post-conflict societies often require media reform, particularly when hate speech, dangerous rhetoric, and media abuses have in part fueled the conflict.

19. **Involvement of civil societies and political organizations:** civil societies and political organizations can play a key role in combating hate crime and genocide ideology. Civil society organizations have a great role in the sense that they can contribute to raising awareness regarding the existence of discrimination, intolerance and hate crime and genocide ideology. They could also implement projects and programs, which challenge stereotypes and that foster social cohesion.

20. Civil leaders, specifically religious leaders, can also play a crucial role in fighting against hate propaganda in preaching love, tolerance and respect for the inherent humanity of all persons. They can also contribute to the consolidation of harmony between people. As Africa accepted democracy as form of continental governance, and democracy is all about free choice in choosing the governments by citizens religious extremism must be resisted by the entire continent. African citizens must exercise democratic rights of choosing and worshipping their God in the religion of their choices.

21. **Political organizations** can contribute through influencing their members in ensuring that their manifestoes containing rightly worded phrases encouraging national unity, tolerance and respect for diversity as well as fostering the use of positive speeches at both public and private fora and the avoidance of discriminatory languages. For effective prevention, political parties should take vigorous disciplinary measures against their members who promote incitement to violence.

#### **V. TIME AND VENUE**

22. The meeting will be held on Thursday, 5 April 2018, at 10:00 a.m., in the Plenary Hall of the Old AU Conference Centre.

**African Union Commission (AUC)**

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PSC Outcomes

Communiqués

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2018-04-05

# Communiqué of the 761st Meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union Held on 5 April 2018, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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