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REPORT OF PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL PSC FIELD MISSION TO LOMÉ, TOGO
TO MARK THE 2022 AFRICA AMNESTY MONTH



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. From 4 to 7 September 2022, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), under the chairship of the Republic of Ghana, undertook a field mission to Lomé, Togo to commemorate for the first time outside the headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa, the 2022 Africa Amnesty Month (AAM). During the mission, the PSC held an interactive session on the implementation of the AAM initiative, in the context of the *AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030* and AU Agenda 2063. The programme of activities also included a ceremony where the symbolic destruction of illicit weapons collected by the Togolese government was performed. The PSC also paid a visit to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) on 6 September 2022. This report summarizes the activities undertaken by the PSC during this field mission.

II. OPENING SESSION

2. The opening of the PSC session was heralded by a colourful event which included a special musical performance, poetry recitals and an arts exhibition to celebrate the holding of the Africa Amnesty Month. During the session, an appeal was made on behalf of children in Africa, on the immediate need for the guns on the continent to be silenced now, rather than 2030, and the continuous call for the promotion of peace in Africa.

3. The programme was attended by the Members of the PSC, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Togolese Republic, who represented the Government of Togo, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union (AU), as well as representatives of the United Nations (UN), the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA), Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of the Media, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and traditional leaders.

III. INTERACTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AFRICA AMNESTY MONTH

4. During the interactive session on the implementation of the AAM and Silencing the Guns on the Continent, the PSC took note of the opening remarks by H.E Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Togolese Republic; H.E. Ambassador Amma Adomaa Twum-Amoah, the Chairperson of the PSC for September 2022 and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana and the statement by , H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security. The PSC also took note of the presentations made by Mr. Adedeji EBO, UNODA Chief Conventional Arms branch and incoming Deputy to the UN High Representative for Disarmament, UN Deputy United Nations High Representative; Lt. Gen. Badreldin Elamin Abdelgadir, the Executive Secretary of RECSA; and Mr. Mazah Paka the representative of the Togolese Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Commission. At the torching ceremony to mark the symbolic destruction of illicit weapons, the PSC was briefed by the President of the Togolese Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Commission.

5. During the session, the PSC also commended the Togolese Republic for hosting the first official launch of the AAM in a Member State since the adoption of Assembly Decision [[Assembly/AU/Dec.645 \(XXIX\)](#)] by the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in July 2017, in Addis Ababa, and emphasized the need to continue engaging civilians on the implementation of AAM as they are the critical stakeholders in the process. In the same context, the PSC underscored the need for an annual rotation of the commemoration of AAM by the Council among the Member States of all five regions of the AU.

6. The PSC further commended all Member States who are implementing the AAM and encouraged them to ensure the safe destruction of all collected illegal weapons in line with the national, continental and international instruments, as well as report on the programmes and activities undertaken during the AAM to the AU Commission. The PSC stressed the need to strengthen marking, record keeping and tracing of weapons to enable countries to keep abreast of the trends of illicit weapon movements at all times.

7. The meeting called for the need to strengthen reporting on activities implemented by Member States, and called for the development of a reporting template to ensure the standardization of information and data collected. In this regard, the AU Commission was called on to develop a draft template on reporting and monitoring for Member States to provide information on their AAM interventions and ensure their successful implementation.

8. The meeting also expressed deep concern over the continued proliferation of illicit weapons in local communities which has fueled increased criminal activity, terrorism and violent extremism and led to the loss of lives and livelihoods. The meeting, in this regard condemned the activities of illegal arms dealers, manufacturers and traffickers for their role in making small arms and light weapons available on the market in an unregulated manner.

9. The PSC encouraged all Member States to implement AU instruments and decisions to ensure the attainment of the Goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa through initiatives such as the AAM. Member States were also called on to strengthen national frameworks to ensure consistent and effective implementation of those instruments and decisions.

10. Emphasis was placed on the need for the AU Commission to conduct surveys on the collection of illicit weapons after every five years in order to provide reliable data on the progress made by the Member States.

11. The PSC also expressed concern over the continued armed conflicts and other forms of insecurity, which are an obstacle to the realization of Africa's aspirations, set out in Agenda 2063. In this vein, the naming and shaming to those hindering peace and fuelling conflicts was underscored as provided for, in the AU Master Roadmap.

12. The PSC encouraged Member States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the relevant continental and international instruments to regulate the international trade in weapons, as well as to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in order to minimize arms transfers to unauthorized end users. Furthermore, the PSC directed the AU Commission to take steps, including convening a meeting of experts from Member States, to elaborate a common African position which will provide guidance to AU Member States during the 4th Review

Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms. The PSC also urged the AU Commission to explore the possibility of developing legally binding instruments on the management of small arms and light weapons and to update the Council on the same.

13. The PSC highlighted the role of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) in fighting the proliferation of illicit weapons in their regions and underscored the need to harmonize and coordinate the strategies and actions of the AU Commission, the RECs/RMs, the UN and the international community to ensure the control of the illicit circulation of weapons on the continent.

14. The PSC also commended the efforts made under the AU/UN Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security from which three Member States have benefitted this year, namely – Tanzania, Liberia and Togo. The PSC further commended the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and other partners for the support provided to Africa and called on other partners to join efforts and provide technical and financial assistance for the implementation of the AAM. In the same vein, the PSC stressed the need to ensure that this support is well coordinated so that it can be of equitable benefit to all African countries.

15. The PSC stressed that the commemoration of the AAM is intended to create awareness and, therefore, needs to be projected to ensure that all citizens of Africa are apprised of, understand and implement the AAM in close collaboration with their national authorities. Consequently, Member States were encouraged to ensure the active participation of the youth and women, as well as the media and faith-based organizations in the sensitization programmes.

16. The PSC expressed deep appreciation to the CSOs for the efforts they are making to support the priority agenda of their respective governments by mobilizing society to silence the guns and to promote peace, security and development, including through the promotion of the use of peaceful means to resolve differences. In this regard, the Council emphasized the role of CSOs in the control of small arms and light arms and highlighted the need for the enhancement of the local capacity of citizens and opinion leaders in the area of sensitization and arms control. The proposal was made for the establishment of a forum for knowledge and experience sharing to allow Member States, CSOs and partners to exchange views, identify gaps and learn from best practices.

17. The PSC underscored the need to link the Silencing the Guns in Africa goal with the implementation of the Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government ([Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.\(XVI\)](#)), which instituted 31 January of each year as “Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation”.

18. The participants witnessed the symbolic destruction of collected illicit weapons organized by the Togolese SALW Commission. A vote of thanks was delivered by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia on behalf of the PSC Delegation after the torching ceremony which commended the important role played by the Togolese SALW Commission in planning and coordinating the collection and destruction of illicit weapons.

IV. VISIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CENTER FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT IN AFRICA

19. On 6 September 2022, the PSC delegation paid a visit to UNREC to learn about the work of the Center and its Strategic Plan to promote collaboration and partnership with the RECs/RMs and the AU Commission, particularly where the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030 is concerned. The PSC delegation and UNREC exchanged views on how to better collaborate and strengthen the implementation of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation activities through, among others, seminars and conferences, capacity-building and training, policy and technical expertise, information and advocacy at the regional and national levels.

20. The PSC finally commended UNREC for its sustained support to AU Member States and encouraged the latter and other bilateral and multilateral stakeholders to deepen cooperation with UNREC in order for it to provide them with adequate assistance in the area of arms control and disarmament.

V. APPRECIATION NOTE

21. The PSC delegation expressed gratitude to the Government and People of the Togolese Republic for the warm hospitality accorded the PSC Delegation during their stay in Lomé and for accepting to host the PSC Session and activities to mark the 2022 AAM. The PSC finally expressed appreciation to all interlocutors for engaging with it to share opinions and best practices.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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