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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE AFRICAN UNION STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ASSASSINATION OF COLONEL JEAN BIKOMAGU, FORMER CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF**

**Addis Ababa, 16 August 2015:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, strongly condemns the assassination of Colonel (rtd.) Jean Bikomagu, former Chief of Army Staff, on 15 August 2015 in Bujumbura, Burundi. She presents the AU's sincere condolences to the family of the deceased and wishes speedy recovery to his daughter who was injured during the attack.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that this despicable act and the numerous other acts of violence recorded in recent months illustrate once again the seriousness of the situation prevailing in Burundi and the potential of further escalation, with catastrophic consequences both for the country itself and for the region as a whole. In this context, she reaffirms the AU's total rejection of violence and condemns all abuses of human rights and other violations of civil liberties. She calls for a transparent and credible investigation to identify the perpetrators of the murders and swiftly bring them to justice.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses once again the need for dialogue and consensus to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the current crisis and preserve the significant gains achieved thanks to the 2000 Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi and the 2003 Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement. She reiterates the AU's call to the Burundian stakeholders, to exercise utmost restraint and demonstrate conciliatory spirit at this critical juncture in the history of their country.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's commitment to assist in the search for a peaceful and consensual solution. In this regard, the AU, in collaboration with other international actors, will continue to extend full support to the mediation efforts led by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda on behalf of the East African Community (EAC).