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PRESS RELEASE

BEGINNING OF THE DEPLOYMENT IN BURUNDI OF THE AFRICAN UNION HUMAN RIGHTS OBSERVERS AND MILITARY EXPERTS

***This deployment is part of the implementation of the AU Peace and Security Council
Communiqué of 13 June 2015***

Addis Ababa, 22 July 2015: The Commission of the African Union (AU) has begun today the deployment in Burundi of an advance team of human rights observers and military experts. This process will continue over the coming days, in parallel with the recruitment of civilian personnel and the generation of military experts' from the AU Member States specifically dedicated to the mission envisaged in Burundi.

This deployment is being carried out in implementation of the communiqué adopted by the PSC at its meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 June 2015. More specifically, it aims to prevent an escalation of the violence in Burundi and to facilitate the resolution of the serious crisis facing the country. The human rights observers will monitor the human rights situation on the ground and report on possible violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The military experts will verify, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, the disarmament of militias and other armed groups. These observers and experts will exercise their mandate in an independent, transparent and credible manner.

The Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, calls on all political actors in Burundi to extend full cooperation to the AU team of human rights observers and military experts, in order to enable them to discharge their mission. In this regard, she stresses that, in the communiqué issued by the East African Community (EAC) following the dialogue that took place in Bujumbura from 16 to 19 July 2015, the parties agreed on the need to deploy AU human rights observers and military experts.

The Chairperson of the Commission takes this opportunity to reiterate, once again, the AU's deep conviction that only dialogue and consensus will allow Burundi to emerge from the serious crisis facing the country, the continuation of which puts the important gains recorded following the August 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement at risk, with serious consequences for regional security and stability. Against this backdrop, she makes an urgent appeal to all the Burundian parties to put the interest of their country above partisan considerations and to extend full cooperation to the efforts being deployed by the EAC with the support of the AU and the rest of the international community.