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PRESS STATEMENT

THE AU STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE TERRORIST ATTACK AGAINST THE REGROUPEMENT CAMP OF SIGNATORY FORCES TO THE PEACE AGREEMENT IN GAO, MALI

Addis Ababa, 19 January 2017: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, learnt with great dismay and deep sadness the odious terrorist attack on 18 January 2017 against a Camp hosting members of the Malian Armed Forces and armed movements, signatories of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, issuing from the Algiers Process, which caused dozens of deaths and injuries among those elements grouped in order to carry out Joint Patrols within the framework of the Joint Operational Mechanism provided for in the Agreement.

The Chairperson of the Commission expressed her most sincere condolences to the bereaved families, as well as to the people and Government of the Republic of Mali and wished a prompt recovery to the injured.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the strong support of the AU to the Government and other parties to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and urges them to pursue their efforts to implement, in good faith, its provisions, particularly those relating to defence and security. She stresses that this cowardly terrorist attack against the troops of the Malian parties which opted for peace and reconciliation, is evidence of the growing isolation of the terrorist groups operating in northern Mali. She reaffirms the imperative need for the AU and the international community to implement the Agreement stemming from the Algiers Process for lasting peace, security and stability in Mali and beyond, in the region.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the readiness and determination of the AU to support Mali and the countries of the region, in general, in their efforts to prevent and combat terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region, especially through regional initiatives, such as the Nouakchott Process. She stresses, in this regard, the need to further strengthen and coordinate national, regional and international efforts, including through the establishment of an African force within the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to thus enable the neutralisation of terrorist groups so that the Mission can continue to assume its stabilisation role more effectively, in conformity with its mandate.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls, once again, on the international community to step up its support to the African efforts to combat the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism.
