

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

497TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

8 APRIL 2015

PSC/PR/BR.(CDXCVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 497th meeting held on 8 April 2015, was briefed by the Commission on the recent elections that took place in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Union of the Comoros, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of Zambia, as well as on the upcoming elections in The Sudan, Togo and Burundi.

Council congratulated the people and political leaders of Nigeria, Zambia, the Comoros and Lesotho for having conducted their respective elections peacefully and successfully. Council stressed that this is a clear demonstration of the commitment of these countries to uphold the AU principles on democracy, popular participation and good governance as enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and other relevant AU instruments.

In particular, Council congratulated the people and political leaders of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the exemplary manner in which they conducted the 28 March 2015 election and called upon the other AU Member States to emulate the example set by Nigeria. Council welcomed, with appreciation, the financial contribution made by the Federal Republic of Nigeria towards enhancing the capacity of the Commission to promote peaceful and credible elections on the African continent.

Council noted the preparations underway for elections in The Sudan, Burundi and Togo. Council called on all stakeholders in these countries to put the interests of their countries above all else and to ensure peaceful and credible elections.

Council recalled its earlier pronouncements on democratization in The Sudan as part of the overall efforts to address the multidimensional challenges facing that country. In this respect, Council reiterated the particular relevance of the national dialogue announced by the Sudanese authorities in January 2014, and the relevant provisions of the communiqué adopted at its 456th meeting held on 12 September 2014, and demanded that all concerned Sudanese stakeholders fully cooperate with the AUHIP towards the successful holding of the national dialogue. In the context of the overall AU's efforts in Sudan and in view of its long standing engagement in that country, Council requested the Commission to dispatch an observer mission for the upcoming general elections. Council looks forward to the conclusions of the AU election observer mission, as well as to a comprehensive update on the situation in The Sudan, by the AUHIP.

Council called on the Government and people of Burundi to ensure that the upcoming elections are conducted in a credible manner and within a peaceful environment. Council welcomed the recent visit undertaken by the Chairperson of the Commission from 26 to 27 March 2015 to Burundi, as well as that of the Commissioner for Political Affairs from 8 to 10 March 2015, with a view to encouraging all Burundian stakeholders to ensure

peaceful and credible elections. Council requested the AU Commission to remain engaged in the political situation in Burundi and to render all necessary support to ensure the success of the electoral process.

Council took note of the preparations that are underway for the presidential election in Togo and encouraged all Togolese stakeholders to ensure that the election is conducted in a peaceful environment.

Council underscored the imperative for the independence of national election management bodies, provision of public funding to political parties and objective media reporting, as well as commitment by political parties to violence-free elections, in order to ensure peaceful, transparent and credible elections.

Bearing in mind the AU theme for 2015 as The Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063, and the fact that women constitute a larger segment of Africa's population, Council stressed the importance of enhancing the participation of women in elections in Africa.

Council reiterated the need for Member States, who have not yet ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which entered into force on 15 February 2012, to take necessary steps to do so, and to comply with all other relevant AU instruments governing the conduct of democratic elections on the continent.

Council requested the Commission to remain actively engaged with all Member States that will be holding elections in the course of 2015. Council also encouraged the Commission to continue to brief the Council on elections in Africa with a view to enhancing the capacity of the Council in the prevention of election-related conflicts.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.