



PRESS RELEASE

Africa Amnesty Month High-Level Dialogue on Achieving the Goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030

Addis Ababa, 23 September 2022: In its efforts to continue the “Silencing the Guns” initiatives throughout the year and beyond, the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS) of the Commission of the African Union (AU), in partnership with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), held the Africa Amnesty Month High-level Dialogue, themed: Continent-wide campaign on Achieving the Goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030, on Thursday, 22 September 2022, at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This year, 2022, marks the fifth year since the Africa Amnesty Month was declared.

The dialogue aimed to encourage Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to commemorate the Africa Amnesty Month for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons/arms. The amnesty provides that persons who surrender their illegally owned weapons/arms shall not be subjected to disclosure humiliation, arrest or prosecution. Moreover, it is also intended to promote the active role of civil society, faith-based organizations, academia, think tanks, the media, partners, and other stakeholders in the realisation of the goal of silencing the guns in Africa by commemorating the Africa Amnesty Month.

In her opening remarks, Director, Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate, PAPS, Ms. Patience Zanelie Chiradza, said: *“The success in silencing the guns depends on our collective ability to withdraw the illicit weapons from the possession of unauthorized individuals. The Africa Amnesty Month is one of the continental programs that seeks to contribute to these efforts”*. Ms. Chiradza called on the Commission, the RECs, the UN and partners to provide enhanced support to the efforts of Member States in strengthening their national legislation to control and regulate civilian possession of firearms. *“This calls for concerted action and a wide range of measures at national, regional, continental and international levels”*, she further stated.

Representatives of some Member States, RECs/RMs, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and RECSA made presentations that highlighted progress made and challenges in achieving the Goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030. The dialogue provided a platform for participants to share views and experiences on the progress made over the past five years since the Africa Amnesty Month was declared in 2017, note the challenges that remain and chart out the way

forward to strengthen the efforts aimed at silencing the guns within the remaining eight years to the 2030 deadline.

The dialogue brought together representatives of Member States, RECs/RMs relevant regional intergovernmental bodies and international organizations, the United Nations, International Partners, Civil Society Organizations, the private sector as well as representatives of the media.

It was noted that the Commission, including in partnership with the UNODA, has been providing technical and modest financial support to some Member States, upon request, to implement some activities during the Amnesty Month, and will continue these efforts in collaboration with partners.

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