



**PRESS RELEASE OF THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL AT THE CONCLUSION OF ITS FIELD MISSION TO THE
REPUBLIC OF SUDAN**

Khartoum, May 09, 2018: The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU has concluded its four (4) day-field mission to Khartoum and Darfur, Sudan, which took place from 5 to 9 May 2018.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Hope Tumukunde, Permanent Representative of Rwanda and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May 2018, the PSC visited Khartoum and Darfur to express its solidarity and reaffirm its support to the people and leadership of Sudan, particularly those in Darfur and to assess the current security trends in the UNAMID area of operation given the fact that there is an ongoing review of the mission aimed ensuring a smooth and seamless draw down of the Mission.

During its visit, the PSC delegation held several consultations with various interlocutors including, the Minister of Defence, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Acting Governor of Northern Darfur, the Commissioner General of the DDR, The Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), the Darfur follow-Up Office, the African Diplomatic Corps in Khartoum, the UNAMID Joint Special Representative and as well as the UNAMID Team.

The PSC Delegation also visited the Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps in Sortoni and Zam Zam in Darfur, where they exchanged views with the representatives of the IDPs.

While in Darfur, the PSC delegation noted reports of improved security environment since its last visit to in May 2017 and commended the Government of Sudan for the efforts deployed towards stabilizing Darfur. The delegation also commended the ongoing disarmament initiative of the Government which has contributed tremendously to the reduction of illegal arms and the inter-communal violence.

The delegation urged the government that disarmament should be maintained so as to have a sustainable Peace and Security in the Region.

The PSC delegation underscored that the major concern was the safety and security of the IDPs and their relationship with the Government.

The PSC noted that there was need for multiple approaches to consolidate peace and security in Darfur. Hence the PSC Delegation expressed its full support to the request submitted to the United Nations for Darfur to be placed on the agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

The PSC Delegation also insisted to both sides that there is need for confidence building between the IDPs and the Government to ensure improvement of human security.

While meeting with the IDP's leaders, the delegation was informed that the IDPs are ready to voluntarily return to their home lands and engage in productive activities for the development of their communities. However, the PSC Delegation noted that there is need to address issues relating to their return, especially as it relates to the land. The delegation noted that land tenure issues exists in all parts of the world and for Sudan the DDPD still offers an opportunity to address such matters. The PSC delegation believes that the Government, through the residual committees of the Darfur Regional Authority (DRA), should intensify efforts towards addressing land issues, IDPs returns, reconciliation, peace building and addressing the root causes of the Sudanese conflict in Darfur.

The PSC delegation informed the Government of Sudan of the PSC's decision, of February 2018, to impose punitive measures if the Darfur armed groups did not join the peace process on the basis of the DDPD. While there were inconclusive, the delegation noted that the recent interactions between the Government of Sudan and Darfur armed movements in Berlin, Germany, give hope of progress. The delegation, therefore, encourages the UNAMID Joint Special Representative together with the international partners, especially Germany and the USA to sustain such engagements.

The delegation also noted during its engagements, that the AU and UN just concluded the Joint Strategic Review Mission on UNAMID and consequently, the outcomes of the review mission will contribute in defining the timelines for the drawdown and eventual withdrawal of the UNAMID from Darfur. Indeed the PSC will review the Joint AU and UN Report in June 2018 with the added advantage of its own findings.

The PSC delegation expressed its appreciation to the people and Government of Sudan for the warm welcome accorded to them and expressed gratitude to the UNAMID and AU Liaison Office in Khartoum for the facilities put in place and efforts deployed for the smooth and successful conduct of the Mission.

2018

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