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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

347TH MEETING

12 DECEMBER 2012

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR (CCCXLVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 347th meeting, held as an open session on 12 December 2012, was briefed by Advocate Sidiki Kaba, Honorary President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Professor Dismas Kitenge Senga, Vice-President of the FIDH and President of Group Lotus, human rights organization, on international justice.

Council welcomed the significant progress made over the last two decades in the establishment of instruments and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law, contributing to a significant strengthening of the fight against impunity in cases of massive violations of human rights. In this regard, Council recalled the relevant provisions contained in the various AU instruments, in particular Article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act, which allows the Union to intervene in a Member State on the basis of a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Council reiterated the commitment of the AU to the fight against impunity, and stressed the importance of international and transitional justice in the promotion of peace and security in Africa, and the need, in the context of the search for solutions to crises and conflicts and in view of the fragility of the peace and reconciliation processes on the continent, to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing. In this context, Council also noted that activities to promote international justice and the fight against impunity and massive violations of human rights must go hand-in-hand with efforts to promote peace, security and stability.

Council commended human rights defenders for documenting violations of human rights in various conflict situations on the continent, and urged them to continue their good work.

Council expressed its appreciation to civil society organizations and the international community for their support to the AU in its efforts to promote and protect human rights in crisis and conflict situations. Council underscored the fact that the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights rests with Member States. In this regard, Council stressed the need for Member States to strengthen their judicial systems to ensure protection of human rights. Council emphasized the need for a close working relationship with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as with the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, which are mechanisms provided for by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

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