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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
109TH MEETING
21 JANUARY 2008
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PSC/PR/BR(CIX)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 109th meeting, held on 21 January 2008, was briefed on the situation in Kenya, in light of the tension and violence that erupted in that country following the presidential election of 27 December 2007.

Council expressed deep concern at the prevailing situation and its humanitarian consequences, as well as at its implications for peace and stability in Kenya and the region as a whole. Council strongly deplored the loss of lives, condemned the gross violations of human rights that occurred in the past weeks and called for an in-depth investigation into those violations with a view to identifying those responsible and bringing them to justice.

Council called on all the parties to exercise restraint, refrain from acts of violence and from any other act that could further complicate the situation, as well as prevail on their supporters to put an immediate end to the violence. Council strongly urged the parties to commit themselves to a peaceful solution to the current crisis through dialogue.

Council welcomed the visit undertaken by the current Chairman of the African Union, President John Kufuor, to Nairobi, from 8 to 10 January 2008, with a view to assisting in defusing the tension, bringing an end to the violence in the country, and facilitating the efforts aimed at finding a solution to the post-election dispute. Council also welcomed the efforts deployed by President Yoweri Museveni, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the East African Community (EAC), and by other leaders of the region. Council looks forward to the planned visit to Kenya of the Chairperson of the EAC, aimed at promoting an early and peaceful solution to the crisis. Council expressed appreciation for the contribution made by other leaders and organizations, in support of the AU efforts.

Council stressed the need for the parties to extend full cooperation to the mediation efforts to be undertaken by the group of eminent African elders led by Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, and established as a follow-up to the visit of the current Chairperson of the AU. Council welcomed the disposition expressed by the parties in this respect.

Council requested the Commission to closely follow developments in Kenya and to report to it, as soon as possible, on the situation in the country and the evolution of the mediation efforts.

Finally, Council stressed the need to initiate a collective reflection on the challenges linked to the tension and disputes that often characterize electoral processes in Africa, including the strengthening of the African capacity at national, regional and continental levels to observe and monitor elections.

Addis Ababa, 21 January 2008

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